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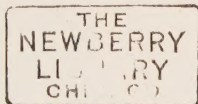
History.

THE REFORMATION.

BY
THE REV. HENRY STEBBING, A.M.

VOL. I.

V. 1



LONDON:

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(1534)

THE REV. HENRY F. AMES, D.D., &c.

Author of "The History of the Reformation in England."



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ANALYTICAL AND CHRONOLOGICAL,

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HISTORY

OF

THE REFORMATION.

CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTORY REMARKS. — COMMENCEMENT OF SIXTEENTH CENTURY. — LEO X. — STATE OF THE CHURCH. — EFFECTS OF THE REVIVAL OF LEARNING. — THE CHARACTER OF THE CLERGY. — STATE OF THE MONASTIC ORDERS. — CONDITION OF THE PEOPLE.

It is a remarkable circumstance in the history of our race, that the evils once introduced by pride and tyranny have usually remained unresisted for several ages. This has been owing partly to the natural timidity of the human mind, when calculating the hazards attending change; and partly to the politic caution with which the enemies of mankind lay the foundation of their schemes, and support them by perpetual appeals to the fears and hopes of their victims. Another circumstance worthy of observation is, that corruption employs almost the same instruments, and pursues the same methods, in all ages, in the church as well as in the state. Civilisation depends on the diffusion of intelligence, and the establishment of just laws: to repress the one, or pervert the other, is to rob society of its intrinsic rights; but, as power can never overstep the proper limits of authority, when the interests of knowledge and justice are preserved, to stop the progress of the one, and keep out

of sight the true foundations and necessary applications of the other, are every where the main efforts of ambition and tyranny. Christianity, again, has so manifestly for its direct object the improvement of man's nature, that to conceal any of its doctrines, or to oppose, under the pretence of its sanctions, the full development and exercise of reason, is to resist its author, and nullify his mercy. But a system so pure and luminous as that of the Gospel is totally adverse to the deccits and artifices necessary for the support of spiritual pride, or ecclesiastical ambition: the system has, therefore, to be modified when employed for such purposes; and, that this may be done securely, every effort must be made to prevent a comparison between the new and the original form of the religion. The domination of the Roman pontiffs afforded, for many ages, a memorable instance of power wholly supported by these means. As bishops of one of the most ancient provinces of the Christian church, they merited reverence, and had a just claim to the authority which Christ has vested in his ministers: but this was not sufficient for the purposes of pride and sensual ambition; and that which the Gospel allowed not, they had to support by a cumbersome scaffolding of crafty inventions. Nor did they stop here; for no invention which tends to violate truth or nature can endure long, if the evidence existing against it be not studiously anticipated. To prevent the light of the Gospel, therefore, from freely circulating, to put a ban upon reason when it ventured to assail even the outworks of usurped authority, was the grand policy of Rome; and in this it succeeded till it left no alternative for mankind but to groan perpetually under the most galling of yokes, or assert the rights of reason and the liberty of the Gospel, with a new and holy enthusiasm. Happily for our race, the spirit of truth led to the adoption of the latter course.

The church presented, at the beginning of the sixteenth century, a melancholy spectacle of disorder and licentiousness. Pontiffs had occupied the seat of su-

preme authority, whose vices were the subject of universal reprobation. Countenanced by their example, the richer clergy indulged themselves in every species of sensual enjoyment: affected pomp in their deportment; luxury in all the details of their establishments; and introduced the principle, that if respect and reverence were to be obtained for ecclesiastics of rank, they must be secured by the splendour of their own living, as well as by the grandeur of their ceremonies at the altar. To the evils thus introduced are to be added those which could not fail to spring from a divided pontificate. The strength of the church of Rome depended wholly on the principle of unity; and, in so far as it in any way performed the offices of a Christian church, the world suffered greatly at the time from the violation of this principle. Considered as one of the means by which the Reformation was assisted, the setting up of the chair at Avignon was politically a good; but, viewed in reference to the Roman church, then the depository of religious authority, the sole dispenser of the doctrines of salvation, it was a circumstance greatly to be lamented by every thoughtful and pious mind. Had the Reformation not speedily followed this deplorable instance of schism, the Christian church would never have recovered the injury it received by such a violation of its consistency. Men could scarcely have been persuaded to render obedience to an authority which rested on the plea of supremacy, when it had ceased to be known for certainty in whom the supremacy existed; and thus left without government, without the bonds of discipline, without any acknowledged guide in matters of doubt or difficulty, the vast community of professing Christians would have rapidly lost every vestige of the features which had so long characterised it as a universal church.

The character of Alexander VI. would have been A. D. viewed with horror in the dark ages of heathenism, and 1503. his career ended in a manner which agreed well with the tenor of his life. Having prepared a poisoned

draught for the cardinal Cornetto and others, he was himself, through design or accident, made the victim of his perfidy. The whole of his pontificate had been passed in the perpetration of crime. A licentious intercourse made him the father of an offspring who inherited the darkest vices of their parent; and, to provide for this offspring, he had despoiled the church of its treasures, and bartered its honours to the basest purchasers. It was to enrich the duke de Valentinois, his son, that he attempted the destruction of the cardinal Cornetto; and his death, which occurred in 1503, afforded an awful instance of the divine judgments, even in this world, on depravity like his.

Pius III., who immediately succeeded to the pontifical dignity, survived his elevation but one month; and the vacant chair was next filled by a man who, though not degraded by vices so odious as those of Alexander, was scarcely better entitled to occupy such a station. Julius II. made no attempt to conceal the tendency of his disposition for scenes of violence. Had he been born to empire, he would probably have become renowned for conquest among the greatest generals of the world: as it was, he exhibited in his character and actions the fierceness of the warrior, with the worst faults of an abandoned priest. The mad ambition which urged him to attempts equally dangerous to the peace of Europe, and the safety of the church, brought down upon him the vengeance of contemporary sovereigns. A council was held at Pisa, in 1511, for the purpose of suppressing his violence; but its decrees were despised by Julius, and formally annulled, the following year, by a council assembled for that purpose in the pontifical palace. This act of daring policy closed his career; and the succession of Leo X.* changed the aspect

* The early part of Leo's life, notwithstanding his ecclesiastical character, had been passed in courts and camps. As the legate of Julius II., he had attended his army in its struggles with the French, and was made prisoner at Ravenna in 1512. It is related, that the soldiers who took him expressed the most profound reverence for their prisoner, of whom they continually besought absolution. Pallavicin. *Con. Trident.* lib. i. c. l. n. 2.

of affairs, and introduced an era not less remarkable for refinement than was that which preceded it for disorder and sanguinary conflicts.

To none of the Roman pontiffs has history given a more brilliant reputation than that accorded to Leo X. A. D. 1513. Sprung from the noble house of Medicis, born and educated amid the glories of Florentine art, this distinguished man ascended the throne in the flower of his age, and possessed of every qualification for attracting the admiration of the world. Had he been imbued with a feeling for divine truth proportionable in any degree to his love of literature and philosophy, the church of Rome might still have recovered itself, and the temporary calm which it enjoyed been made conducive to its progressive reformation. But the refinements of taste, the ardent pursuit of inquiries which delight the mind with the sense of its activity, though not incompatible with the profoundest piety, are not calculated to cherish a weak faith, or foster humility and holiness when not well grounded in the heart. Leo saw himself placed in a situation in which he might become the patron of learning and the arts, and acquire the reputation, so precious to an elegant mind, of being the friend of genius.* His own acquirements were considerable: they were sufficient to make him the equal of the scholars whom he wished to patronise; and the ambition of the man of letters was excited simultaneously with the generous ardour of the patron. The period in which he began his career was full of dangers for a pontiff of this character: it demanded the severe

According to Paulus Jovius, he had not been backward in the use of his sacerdotal authority in urging the soldiers to battle; for that historian relates that he promised eternal life to as many as should fall in the pope's cause. *De Vita Leonis*, lib. ii. p. 43.

* The unfitness of Leo for his high office is not disallowed by those who would have preferred being his panegyrists. Palavicin says distinctly, that while he excelled in all profane learning, he neglected his duty by passing over that part of literature which was not only the most noble, but the most fitted to his situation; and that, when placed at the head of the church, he took far greater pleasure in the society of those who were skilful in the fables of Greece, and the graces of the poets, than in that of scholars who studied the history of the church and the doctrines of the fathers. *Palavicin. Con. Trident.* lib. i. c. 2. n. 2.

energies of an intellect deeply imbued with Christian virtues, and strengthened by the convictions of experience. The corruptions which deformed the church might have been viewed by such a mind as affording reason for extraordinary labours, and a line of policy equally distinguished by its boldness and its purity: the same corruptions, to a man of Leo's character, could only discourage it from exertion in the government of the church, and inspire it with a desire to escape from the gloomy disorder it presented, into the smooth and flowery paths of philosophy.

Melancholy as was the state of things during nearly the whole of the fifteenth century, much had been done in that period for the interests of learning. The foundations of a noble literature were early laid in Italy by Dante and Petrarch; both of them men of immense capacity, and enthusiastic in the defence of truth and liberty. Their writings prove how earnestly they yearned after knowledge; how high a value they placed on every ray of light which broke upon them from the past; and how they rejoiced when the truths which they demonstrated to themselves by solitary reflection were found deposited in the records of antiquity. It was almost absolutely necessary that the task of reviving learning should fall upon men like these; that the value of what had passed into oblivion should be made manifest by those who had much of what was precious to offer from themselves. Had the zeal of the mere scholar been employed in the undertaking, the dry bones might have been found, the skeleton shown complete; but men would never have cared to look upon the cold and fleshless forms thus reproduced; and the scholar, unrewarded for his toil, would have ceased to labour. Those fertile and original minds, on the other hand, who led the way in this great work, gave instant life and beauty to what they recovered from the past: they made the treasures they brought forth beautiful to the eye and heart of the meanest of men; and an anxiety for knowledge was thereby awakened, which soon pro-

duced a general change in the notions of every class of society.

The superintendence of Divine Providence is distinctly visible in the progress of these important events. When a succession of remarkable men distinguishes one particular period, there is a strong presumptive evidence that the ruler of the universe has some great work for them to execute ; but this evidence amounts to what is not far short of demonstration, when we find events and circumstances falling out in such a manner as to afford the most signal assistance to the instruments thus employed. The revival of learning could never have been effected, had not many occurrences removed the difficulties which so long opposed it. Europe required teachers from the East ; the writings of authors, copies of whose works could only be found in sufficient numbers in the magnificent collections of remote countries. The ruin of the Eastern empire led immediately to the satisfying of this want. Native professors of the Greek language and literature established themselves, soon after that event, in most of the large Italian towns ; manuscripts were circulated freely among the scholars of the age ; new paths were opened for inquiry, and fresh means every day afforded to assist the adventurer in his enterprise.*

* The solicitude of Leo to recover and publish the works of the ancients is strikingly shown in his two letters to the archbishop of Mentz, copied by Bayle, as communicated to him by M. de Seidel :—" We send John Heytmen, our beloved son, clerk of the diocese of Liege, &c. &c., to search for valuable and ancient books that have been lost through the injury of time ; in which business we spare no expense ; only that, as we have determined, from the very beginning of our pontificate, solely with a design to promote the honour and glory of the Most High, we may, by God's assistance, cherish, promote, and serve famous men of all sorts, especially the learned. Wherefore, intending to procure the publication of as many such books as can come into our hands, for the common good of all learned men, we affectionately exhort your fraternity, and earnestly entreat you in the Lord, that, if you ever propose to do a grateful action, you would transmit to us, as soon as possible, fair and correct copies all those books, or, which we rather wish, the books themselves. . . . And, because the said John has promised in a short time to give us the 33d book of Livy, of the Macedonian war, we have commissioned him to give it into your fraternity's hands, to be transmitted as soon as possible, by a faithful messenger, to us, or our beloved son, Philip Beroaldus, librarian of our apostolical palace. But, because we have ordered to be paid here in the city, to the said John, a certain sum of money, and are indebted to him a certain sum for ex-

But "the revival of learning" is an expression of doubtful meaning, and ought scarcely to be employed to describe the great change now about to be produced in the state of the Western World. It was not so much the revival of learning, as the more general and certain diffusion of knowledge, which led to the revolutions we have to contemplate. The stream never reaches an elevation higher than its source; and if mankind had been left to enjoy only what could be afforded by Greek and Roman literature, they would never have advanced beyond the state in which the revival found them. That this would have been the case, is shown by the fact, that, shortly after the first feeling of enthusiasm was subsided, the learned of Europe began to form themselves into societies, in which they were contented to pursue discussions on minute points, which bore scarcely any relation to the interests of the world, or the support of religion. Neither Greece nor Rome had the means of enriching the mass of the people with intelligence: and, in reality, because, in respect to the bulk of mankind, the best periods of their history were ages of darkness. A literature produced under these circumstances must always have been limited in its design: cold and sceptical in its spirit, and little calculated to impress the souls of men with any solemn convictions of eternal truth. But what it was unfitted to effect, when full of original freshness, it was not likely to promote, in any considerable degree, when revived after the lapse of ages. We must be careful, therefore, not to attribute to the cultivation of classical literature too important a place among the efficient causes of the Reformation. Its chief value consisted in

penses already made and to be made, we will, and authorise, and command your fraternity, after he shall have received the said book of Lamy, to pay, or cause to be paid, to the said John 117 gold ducats of the chamber, out of the money arising from indulgences granted through those provinces, in favour of the royal fabric of the Prince of the Apostles. . . . You are likewise to assist the said John with safe-conducts, letters, and aids, and help him through your provinces, in coming at books; and, if occasion be, engage your word for him, that the books shall be returned within a certain time, and sent back to their places,"—Art. *Leo X.*

the models which it afforded for the arrangement of thought; and in those beautiful forms of expression which arose from the same delicate perception of the fit and the graceful, as the noble productions of the sculptor and the architect. In these respects it offered a rich reward to the careful student: he learned thereby to express his opinions with truer force: the mirror he held up reflected the images of things with greater vividness; and he was taught by what methods the finest minds had communicated to each other as much of wisdom as unassisted reason could acquire. These advantages would be rejected by no one who paid due attention to the cultivation of his intellect; and the good thereby produced was sufficient to fill the hearts of enlightened men with the liveliest admiration for the revived literature.

The introduction of the classical writers was followed by very important changes in the character and pursuits of the higher orders of the clergy. Hitherto, the few who were not corrupted by sloth and sensuality had either been content to follow the simple guidance of their own feelings, or the counsels of such writers as treated of spiritual duties in the most general forms; or, if men of active minds, they had plunged deep into those speculative studies which, since the time of Aquinas and Scotus, had wedded theology to the subtleties of logic. Nothing could be more opposite to the style in which the doctrines of religion were exhibited, by disputants of this character, than the recovered literature of antiquity. Chiefly distinguished for purity of expression, and a perfect lucidness of order, it, for the most part, rejected whatever was obscure either in thought or language. Obscurity is inconsistent with elegance; the ease and flow of natural observation with attempts to astonish by acuteness of analysis. When the study of the classics, therefore, became general among divines, they lost, by degrees, their confidence in the scholastic forms of expression; and soon began to discover that, if they would imitate those fine

examples of eloquence which filled them with so new a delight, they must modify not only their style, but the character of the subjects on which they were employed. The charms of literature were not to be resisted by minds capable of enjoying them, and long confined to the harsh and severe paths of an unfruitful theology. Numbers, consequently, of the most active men of the fifteenth century became, towards its close, as remarkable for their classical acquirements as their immediate predecessors had been for logical acuteness, and profound knowledge of systematic divinity. In the progress of the revived literature Leo was fitted both by nature and education to take a lively interest. His mind had been imbued, from infancy, with an intense love of whatever addressed itself to a refined taste; and, having too much feeling and good sense to employ his power in the defence of licentiousness, he gathered about him a large circle of scholars, whose professed object it was to teach the principles of a pure philosophy, and animate each other in the pursuit of substantial good.

That the reformation of abuses was not likely to form an essential part in the policy of such a person, is deducible from many considerations. The work of reforming corruptions, by which a vast body of men are supported in ease and luxury, requires qualities not often found in the character of the elegant man of letters. There were circumstances, moreover, which peculiarly unfitted Leo for such a task: he loved leisure; was anxious for a splendid court; and, to secure the enjoyment of these, it was necessary that he should pursue a line of policy as favourable as possible to the increase of his revenues. Had he endeavoured to repress the waton luxury of the clergy, he must have begun by introducing economy and simplicity into the arrangements of the court; and the enmity which must have attended such proceedings would have left him little opportunity for cultivating his favourite studies. Leo, therefore, it might be expected, would obey his natural inclinations; and, while surrounded by his

learned companions, leave the church in the state in which he found it when ascending the papal throne.

The chief points for consideration, in examining the affairs of this period, are, the general character of the clergy ; the state of the monastic orders ; and the apparent dispositions of the people. On these subjects we possess sufficient information to warrant certain conclusions of the highest importance in such an inquiry. The writings of Wickliffe abound in censures which could only have been provoked by the existence of vices not less general than enormous. It is, however, certain that, while his exertions awakened a small number of ingenuous-minded men to reflection, they only served, in respect to the clergy, as a body, to rouse the most malignant spirit of opposition. The state of things in which this bitter controversy had its origin in England, was that of the church at large : nor is there any reason to believe that the worst features of it lost their deformity as the system of corruption became more inveterate in its course. At the close of the fifteenth century, we trace, with ease, the broad path which error and the most vicious excesses had made for themselves to the very door of God's sanctuary. The popes were described, by the councils and leading members of the catholic church, as monsters of iniquity : their power as temporal princes had been abused, till it rendered them odious as the worst of petty tyrants ; their violation of every principle of sanctity being too great and public a scandal to be defended even by the most bigoted of churchmen. But, evil as was the influence exercised by these abandoned rulers of Christendom, it would have been almost annihilated, had the clergy, instead of partaking in the guilt of their chief, performed the simple duties of their office with sober and earnest zeal. It is to the parochial ministers the people look for instruction and examples of holiness ; it is from them they receive the bread of life and the waters of salvation ; and, so long as they are faithful to the charge imposed upon them, the Christian world is preserved in the true pro-

fession and practice of religion. But, at the period to which we allude, scarcely a vestige remained of the noble simplicity and holiness which had given such influence to the earlier Christian teachers. Those of the clergy who possessed large benefices manifested all the evil influence of ambition: they panted for the rank and honours which shone from the eminences just above them; and their time and their thoughts were mainly employed in securing the political influence necessary to their advancement. The inferior orders, feeling their dependance on the superstitious attachment of the people, left no means unsought for keeping up that state of things in which they found their advantage. Thus their revenues were increased, and thus they discovered, from time to time, how they might indulge themselves, without danger, in the violation of the most sacred principles. Hence the ignorance of the people, and the vices of the clergy, multiplied in exact proportions; and, had it not been for the mercy of Providence, and that principle of renovation by which it works, the very dispensation given for our defence would have been made the cause of our irremediable ruin.

To the monastic institutions may be ascribed the origin of many of the corruptions which thus overspread the world. Monachism itself had its beginning in an erroneous view of Christian holiness. Every precept of the Gospel is imbued with the spirit of social benevolence, and appeals to the genuine and fundamental principles of human nature; which are so formed as to be indissoluble bonds, compacting the whole mass, together, and leaving not a single individual free to drop away till eternity makes him the subject of a new system. But attempts to resist a law of nature are always productive of mischief, and, consequently, when the opinion gained ground, that it was enough for a man to provide for the welfare of his own soul, a selfish love of repose became substituted for the ready zeal which had formerly made Christians ready not only to suffer, but to labour.

It is a remarkable fact, that the various monastic institutions claimed support on principles which, in many respects, were of a directly contrary tendency. The order of St. Francis contended, that the perfection of the Christian character can only be attained by the discipline of poverty. The Dominicans and others amassed as much wealth as they could gather, and seemed to consider that the dignity of holiness could only be supported by princely revenues. Again, solitude, and the most complete abstraction from intercourse with the world, was regarded by all as essential to the growth of piety and the performance of the duties which belong to a Christian in his best state; and yet the few truly distinguished and spiritual-minded men, to whom the monkish orders owed whatever was best in them, acquired their reputation by long and painful journeyings and labouring for the good of thousands. This circumstance points to one of the principal causes of monastic corruption. The grand error committed when the founders of the religious orders formed their several systems, consisted in their establishing laws for the many on the peculiar feelings of a few minds influenced by peculiar motives, and freed from the ordinary impulses of passion. When, in process of time, the temptations to leisure and a certain species of independence, had gathered together vast numbers of monks, the major part retaining their natural character, and all the restlessness of passion, the error thus committed became manifest: but it was then too late to correct it. The church had adopted the monastic orders as its offspring; and the corruptions of each had now for so long a time run in the same channel, that no attempt could effectually be made to correct the abuses of the one, without assailing them, at the same time, in the other.

In the foremost rank of the vices which degraded the monks of the fifteenth century, were pride and avarice. The one was fostered by their separation from the rest of mankind; by the immense value which had been set

upon the qualities to which they pretended ; and still more by the power they enjoyed over the minds and consciences of the people. Of this there could be no sign, when the pious recluses of the early times laid the foundation of monasticism ; but, with the light which experience has given us, it seems worthy of wonder that the danger was not sooner discovered, and the system, fraught as it was with such palpable evils, in some degree modified. Avarice, like pride, was one of the vices least to be feared, it would seem, by the authors of asceticism ; their glory, as well as their piety and their happiness, consisted in their freedom from the cares and temptations attending the possession or pursuit of wealth. Several of their number had given up large inheritances, as stumbling-blocks in their way to heaven ; and, for some ages, the greater portion of monks and hermits was composed of stern-minded, contemplative, or melancholy men, whose internal constitution had too little in harmony with the spirit of the world to let avarice or ambition invade their cells. The case was greatly altered when men of worldly, though indolent, disposition embraced the profession of monks : they required an ample supply for their wants ; their leisure only tended to increase the force of passion ; and the consequence was, that the credulity and mistaken zeal of the multitude had to provide them with those means of gratifying their wishes, which the rest of men are obliged to earn by patient and self-denying industry. Contrition is a perilous experiment. The monastic vocation lost its only security, when the first attempt was made to give the several religious institutions a means of support independent of what each fraternity could fairly earn for itself.

Shortly before the Reformation, each of those perverted principles which characterised monasticism had acquired its full strength and maturity. Bigoted and daring, the Dominicans shrank from no undertaking, however perilous or destructive to society, which might forward their own designs. Fanatical, deceitful, and

licentious, the mendicant orders, while pretending to beg their bread, sowed dissension wherever they came; stirred up the people against their regular instructors; and defied the common sense of mankind by declaring eternal war with every species of learning and improvement.

When it is recollected that, with principles so little in harmony with any law on which society can be established, large numbers of these monks were as intent on gratifying their own wishes as they were bold in the defence of their order, some idea may be formed of the evils to which society was subjected when invaded, both in its public and private relations, by such insidious foes. They exercised a tyranny from which there was no escape; and it at length arrived at this, that either society must dissolve the natural union between religion and civilisation, or, by some grand effort, shake off the burden it had borne for so many ages. The condition of the people at this period was marked by circumstances as injurious to the moral and religious character of man, as they are revolting to his sense of natural dignity and freedom. Devotion had become a form; faith was lost in the single axiom of obedience; and thus the only means by which the mass of the people can be permanently exalted above the feeling of earthly dependance, lost its influence, and they were left to struggle through life perpetually deluded and tormented by the feverish applications of superstition. Knowledge was denied them, and for several ages they had patiently endured the privation; but, in the period immediately preceding the Reformation, a spirit of inquiry began to manifest itself: the minds of men grew restless, as if tired of too long a repose; questions were put which demanded an answer at the hands of churchmen; and the refusal of this answer was such an offence against the respect due to the common sense of mankind, that it speedily produced a distrust, which, but for the overruling providence of God, might have ended in universal apostacy.

The principles of civil liberty could scarcely make themselves known, when the rights of conscience lay like dust and ashes on the altar of infallibility. A long series of wars between the different states of Europe had done much towards inspiring the lowest orders of the people with a sense of their own importance. Physical force is easily estimated; and the very means by which despotism is supported afford a sign and an incitement to the multitude in the work of revolution. But those violent changes which have been produced by the rising of gigantic squadrons, urged on by a blind consciousness of wrong, with no guide but hatred, and no aim but revenge, have rarely ended in good. The natural flow and swelling of the ocean preserves the vast body of its waters from corruption: the fury of the tempest only brings up weeds and mud from the bottom. Had the feeling of numerical strength and physical power been sufficient to effect any improvement in the condition of the people at this period, it would have rapidly followed the wars and internal commotions of Italy, Germany, and England. But, instead of such being the consequence of these events, the people continued to suffer the most grievous oppression. Taxation was increased as the ambitious views of princes expanded; new principles were invented for governing by arbitrary enactments and decrees; and political inquiry was almost as dangerous as the crime of heresy and schism. In this state of things, industry had to contend with many of its most dangerous enemies; and how the progress of society towards the enjoyment of wealth, freedom, and intelligence, might be aided, was a problem which the acutest of politicians would scarcely attempt to solve.

CHAP. II.

REMARKS ON THE NATURE AND ORIGIN OF INDULGENCES. —
 COMMENCEMENT OF THE PREACHING OF INDULGENCES UNDER
 LEO X. — TETZEL. — LUTHER. — HIS OPPOSITION TO TETZEL.
 — IS CITED TO APPEAR BEFORE THE POPE. — APPEARS AT
 AUGSBURG. — ESCAPES. — HIS DIFFICULTIES AT THIS PERIOD.

SUCH was the general state of Christendom, when Leo X. began to find that the ordinary revenues of the church were not sufficient to supply the demands of his luxurious tastes.* Too refined to practise open tyranny, and too haughty to abridge his expenditure, he saw himself constrained to employ the resources of the most ingenious policy to escape the inconveniences with which he was evidently threatened. Unhappily for mankind, religion, when corrupted, furnishes pretences for fraud and oppression, which defy the sagacity of ordinary minds. The reasoning by which a certain class of fundamental truths are established may easily, to an unpractised ear, be employed in the defence of error. Truth and falsehood are opposites; but the distance between them is not often distinctly perceived; and, when the intervening space is filled up with sophistry, or mysticism, thousands may be led from the one to the other without fear or resistance.

* The luxury of Leo would have exhausted the revenues of a kingdom. He is said to have spent 100,000 gold pieces at his coronation; on which occasion he rode, as if the chief of a royal triumph, the Thracian horse on which he had been taken prisoner at Ravenna. "Fuit autem is dies," says his biographer, "omnium qui a Gothicis temporibus Romane urbi felicius illuxerint, longe clarissimus: nunquam enim ullum vel ampliore vel ornatiore hominum concursu spectaculum celebratum fuisse, vel legendo, vel audiendo meminerant. Protecte erant aulaeis regiones, ridebant januae civium festa fronde et floribus, fenestrae stratis tapetibus ornabantur: in omnibus triviis triumphales arcus occurrebant, ad veteris Romane magnitudinis exemplum picturis et statuis mirum in modum exornati: cardinalium et antistitem comitatus usque ad humiliora servitia serico et purpura, multoque item auro præfulgebat: ipsi cardinales sacras aureas et pietas induti vestes militaribus equis vehebantur."—*De Vita Leonis X.* lib. iii. p. 57.

The doctrine of indulgences arose, as a natural consequence, out of the system of discipline established by the Roman church. It was found necessary, even in the apostolic age, to institute rules for the punishment of evil-doers, and the correction of thoughtless or weak professors of the faith. These rules applied immediately to the preservation of that purity of manners, and steady adherence to the doctrines originally given to the saints, to which the Christian temple must in all ages be indebted for its security. But, as the church itself became corrupt, and its rulers sought authority for the sake of personal aggrandisement, the principle of discipline lost its original value, and laws were multiplied, in order to make up by their numbers what had been sacrificed in strength.

Whatever, however, be the authority of a church, it cannot support itself against the ordinary wants and wishes of humanity without rendering, in its turn, something of homage to the general necessities of nature. The consequence is, that such of its laws as are not intrinsically moral have frequently to be relaxed: reasons are found in individual cases for granting exemptions from its penalties; and the interests of the church, it is seen, are better preserved by lenity than they could possibly be by a too severe and unindulgent discipline. In this respect the heads of the church have only followed the example of other legislators. Laws must be general; and the allowed punishment of guilt must be equivalent to the enormity of the specified crime in its worst forms and circumstances: but, as the same species of crime may be committed with different degrees of turpitude, and under circumstances more or less aggravating, it ought evidently to be within the power of those who judge, and award the punishment, to determine the amount of the penalty due from the offender. The church, moreover, owes its origin and authority to a voluntary association, and its members are taught to expect the ultimate punishment of their crimes in another world.

This renders it doubly necessary that no force should be exercised without the most careful adjustment to the expediency of discipline. Whenever a punishment is inflicted which the interests of good order do not require, the rulers of the church overstep their authority, and palpably violate every safe and prudent maxim of ecclesiastical government.

It is plain, from considerations of this kind, that, as the church continued to increase, and extend its domination over thickly populated countries, much caution would be necessary in the administration of its laws. The punishments of a spiritual government are strictly sanatory; and are inflicted not so much for the safety of the community as the deliverance of the offender from a sorer evil. From this it may be concluded, that, where the infliction of the penalty would plunge the sufferer into despair, or otherwise impose upon him a burden too heavy for his strength, the authority and wisdom of the church are profitably employed in modifying the rigour of its justice.

The expediency of admitting a penitent to communion, without pressing the penal discipline beyond the appearance of genuine sorrow, was acknowledged in the earliest ages of the church. Some there were, who would not allow that the soul which had sinned against the faith could ever be fully purified from its guilt: but their opinion was opposed both by the principle and the practice of the church; and, in the primitive times, the trembling offender knew, from the beginning of his penitence, that the door of mercy would be opened to him as soon as he proved himself sincere in his confession and humiliation.

Scarcely, however, had ecclesiastical authority fully established itself, when the pride and ambition of many of its professors gave rise to a danger which threatened the worst consequences. The breach of a divine and moral law is one thing; the violation of a rule of discipline is another; and though the latter offence is,

in some cases, strongly imbued with moral turpitude, they can never be confounded without serious injury both to religion and government. In no one point, perhaps, did the church of Rome offend more against the interest of Christianity than in this confounding of things which ought always to be viewed with the most cautious discrimination. It unsettled, thereby, the grand principles of human conscience, and, opening the door to the most rapacious of invaders, left no man free from robbery and oppression.

The dire effects of so fatal and voluntary an error could not long remain concealed: but it was many ages before the evil grew to its full proportions. At first, the punishments inflicted by the church were little more than an extension of that severe discipline which the sternest professors of the faith, in early days, were willing to impose upon themselves. They were then gradually increased in severity, till they resembled the inflictions of legal justice; and no sooner had penance assumed this character, than the system of indulgences demanded greater caution than ever, both in its establishment and its application.

To secure submission was the first object; to give an appearance of fitness and propriety to the penance, was the next. Bodily mortification afforded the readiest and, seemingly, the most useful method of punishing sin: but it was soon found that the rich and delicate shrunk from the payment of such a penalty, and that great care was necessary in compelling them to undergo a species of suffering which might lead to their defying, out of mere terror and disgust, the bitterest anathemas of the priest. Some means, therefore, had to be devised, whereby the church, without yielding its rights, might soften the rigour of its inflictions. The precept, accordingly, of the apostle was not forgotten; and, "charity shall cover a multitude of sins," appears to have furnished the clergy of the middle ages with a valuable guide in cases of difficulty and danger.

Had the heads of the church only applied this prin-

ciple from a wise and honest consideration of human infirmity, much good might have been derived from such a commutation of their penances. The sacrifice of luxury, the necessity of self-denial, imposed by the withdrawal of the means for immediate indulgence, is, in itself, no unapt retribution for thoughtless folly; and, when the punishment of error is made available to the important purposes of aiding the distressed, and instructing the ignorant, the church has done its best in adopting such a method of correcting its erring children. But ecclesiastical jurisdiction had been extended beyond its due limits. Penance, it was taught, might atone for offences, the forgiveness of which must ever depend upon the will and the mercy of God, and the conviction of the sinfulness of which ought always to be impressed as deeply as possible on the mind. A breach of the ordinances of the church, as such, might be atoned for by any satisfaction which the church chose to specify: but the law of God is preeminently a law to the church; and a sin against this law, who can forgive, but God only? A penance might be imposed, and excommunication pronounced against the offender, and, on his repentance, the church might declare, according to the authority which Christ had given it, that his sin was removed; but, in this case, it possessed no power beyond that of expressing its horror of sin, and declaring God's will in respect to sincere penitents. It only required that this should be forgotten, to bring down the judgment seat of the Almighty from heaven, and set it up upon earth, without regard either to his power or his laws.

The assertion of a right to commute the penance for one species of offence being supported on the equal plea of mercy and necessity, the right of modifying the whole system of punishment, according to apparent expediency, was asserted without any danger of immediate contradiction. As offences against discipline, therefore, might be atoned for by the payment of a fine to the

church, the next step was to allow the breaker of the divine law to buy himself off from the expected anathema; and, as the church had undertaken to punish or absolve the greatest of sinners by its own laws and authority, the church had but to be satisfied to give the conscience-stricken offender a perfect feeling of security as to any future consequences.*

By the process thus generally described, the Roman hierarchy had at length converted their power over men's consciences into a source of revenue. But another particular was wanting to render the system complete. The fears of the sinner could not always be quieted by the authority of the church. A want was felt which it required some reference to the love and goodness of a Divine Spirit to satisfy; and, when the humbled suppliant for mercy remained sorrow-stricken and dismayed, notwithstanding the assurance that his confessions and penances had atoned for his offences, what means were left to soothe and convince his troubled and questioning mind? The resources of the church were not exhausted. It was decided that Christ had done more than enough to redeem the world; and the saints more than sufficient to satisfy the demands of their Lord. Was the superabundant holiness to be treated as a valueless commodity? And, if regarded as a treasure, under whose keeping was it placed, and in what manner was it to be employed? The answers were obvious to the Roman doctors and casuists. It pertained to the church; was properly at the disposal of its prelates; and ought to be distributed among those who needed it, to make up for their own wants and

* Maimbourg (*Hist. Lutheranism*), has stated the doctrine of indulgences with sufficient clearness to establish the proper groundwork of the controversy:—"Clemens VI. in decretali vel constitutione sua universali ter ab ecclesia recepta, exponit dogma fidei, quod Jesus Christus infinitum nobis thesaurum reliquerit meritorum et satisfactionis superabundantis passionis suae, et B. Virginis, quae ipsa tota fuit innocentia, et Sanctorum, qui per penitentias voluntarias, aut per martyria, longe ultra meritum suum tolerata, satisfecerunt pro peccatis et peccatis, per sacramentum penitentiae remissis. Porro quod pastores ecclesiae applicare nunc possunt viventibus potestate clavium, et mortuis per viam suffragii, ut a penis peccatorum quas meruerunt, liberentur, sumendo et offerendo Deo ex hoc thesauro, tantum quantum opus est ad exsolvendum debitum."

infirmities. They reasoned, in short, as if the distribution of manna in the wilderness had been an intended type of the mode in which holiness was to be used at a later period. "He that gathered much had nothing over; and he that gathered little had no lack."

The advantage which Urban II. had taken of this principle might be defended by many considerations little offensive even to men of understanding, when warmed and excited by enthusiasm. He promised remission of sins for a purpose which had the honour of Christ as its end: but no sooner was it allowed that he who gave money to forward the expeditions to the Holy Land purchased the same title to indulgences as the crusader himself, than every barrier was broken down which had hitherto kept the daring offender against truth and holiness from the sanctuary of the church. The infamous Alexander VI., and the haughty Julius II., found in the system thus established an inexhaustible source of profit: indulgences were sold like any other species of marketable commodity; and vice had no longer much to dread either from the chastisement of discipline, or the terrors of conscience.

Leo X., therefore, had precedents to encourage him in pursuing the measures he was about to adopt; but such was the exhausted state of his finances*, that he saw himself obliged to employ a more systematic method than his predecessors in granting indulgences as a source of revenue. In forming his plans, he was mainly assisted by his relative, Laurentius Pucci, whom he had made cardinal of Santiquatro. This ecclesiastic possessed considerable ability; was learned, acute, and

* It was supposed at the commencement of his pontificate that the golden age was about to return. "*Floreat enim tum Roma præstantibus ingenis, copia incredibili rerum omnium, et a clementiore celo inusitata aeris salubritate, ita ut Leo tantæ virtutis ac amplitudinis pontifex, auream ætatem post multæ sæcula condidisse crederetur.*"

For Rome itself this might have been the case, had the resources of the church been fairly managed: that city, with its surrounding territory, enjoyed the collected offerings of every kingdom in Europe, and thereby retained the most substantial portion of its ancient privileges. The united folly, sensuality, and ambition of the pontiffs alone reduced it to comparative poverty.

active. Fond of wealth, he chiefly occupied himself in the study of politics and civil employments; and, though pretending to no skill in theology, appeared, at this juncture of affairs, to be endowed with qualities which might render him a highly valuable servant of the church.

The immediate pretence for renewing the sale of indulgences was afforded by the unfinished state of the cathedral of St. Peter; an edifice which had employed the attention of some of the noblest artists in the world, and which had claims upon the veneration and generosity of the whole of Christendom. By the document which made known the wishes of the pope in respect to this building, indulgences were proffered which embraced in their range the simplest gratification of the appetite, and the most important wants of the soul. Did the epicure wish to have his butter, his eggs, and his cheese during Lent, he was permitted to enjoy them, if he would contribute to the building of St. Peter's; was the privilege of having a private confessor desirable, it might be purchased in the same way; did the recollection of sin torment the mind, a full remission was offered on similar conditions; and was the affectionate heart worn with fears and anguish lest some beloved friend had to endure the pains of purgatory, his deliverance might be made secure on the payment of a sufficient sum to the papal treasury!

Germany presented a wide and open field for successful experiment. To his favourite sister, Magdalena, who had married Francesco Cibo, the natural son of Innocent VIII., Leo assigned the entire profits of the sale of indulgences in Upper and Lower Saxony. At the same time, he transmitted his orders to Albert of Brandebourg, archbishop of Magdeburg and Mentz, to publish the sale, by means of authorised preachers, through various parts of the country. These orders were received by the archbishop with no little satisfaction. The church had scarcely a prelate more given to expensive pleasure, or by whom money was more anxiously

sought, than Albert of Brandebourg. In the agreement entered into between him and the pope, a full half of the receipts was assigned as his share ; and the agent appointed to execute the design for these powerful principals was the head of the Cordeliers of Mayence. Such, however, had been the feeling inspired in the minds of some of the clergy by previous sales of indulgences, that the favoured monks seconded their guardian in avoiding any participation in the affair. To elude the explanations which might have been necessary, had they stated their opinions too abruptly, they recommended a Dominican, named John Tetzel, as well fitted to perform the required duties. This man had already exercised a similar office at the command of the Teutonic knights in Prussia ; and had succeeded so well in his extortions, that the infamy of his conduct was readily pardoned and forgotten.*

The preliminaries being settled, Tetzel, and a chosen band of collectors, began their appointed labours. Never has fraud been veiled by a more shameless audacity than that assumed by these preachers of indulgences. Tetzel, said his followers, has saved, by his indulgences, more souls than St. Paul by his preaching. To this they added, that the cross which they set up in the churches, with the arms of the pope, had the same virtue as the very cross of Christ ; and, that no sooner was the tinkling of the money paid for an indulgence heard in the collector's basin, than the souls, thus redeemed, were delivered from the bondage of purgatory. The very nature of such assertions, it might have been supposed, would have roused the indignation of the people, and led to the immediate expulsion of the preachers : still more probable does it seem that this would have been the case, when it is further added,

* Cochleus assigns the reputation which Tetzel had acquired in this expedition as the cause of his being chosen on the present occasion ; and adds, that Staupitz and Luther, with the rest of the Augustine monks, beheld this appointment with the most violent indignation. He describes the former as " *principui duo gregis sui arctes, fama et autoritate celebres, et prae aliis conspicui.*" *Acta et Scripta*, p. 3.

that their lives were characterised by a licentiousness which defied the most ordinary rules of decency. But there is a state of things in which imposture may be carried to any extent. The success of religious frauds depends not so much on the seeming reasonableness of the statements advanced, as on the hopes and wishes of those to whom they are made. To a people dying of famine, the vilest of slaves would be a welcome messenger, if he proclaimed tidings of approaching succour; and, improbable as his story might be, thousands, in their anxiety and despair, would wholly forget their hatred of his character, to comfort themselves with the hopes which he inspired.

No pains were spared to confirm the dispositions of the blinded multitude in favour of the system of which they were the victims; and such was the success attending these efforts, that the preachers of indulgences were received in the towns they entered with the profoundest delight and reverence. Preceded by a long train of priests, monks, senators, and the great body of the citizens, their approach was announced by the loud pealing of bells and anthems, while the book which contained the instrument of their authority, and which was richly emblazoned with gold ornaments, was exhibited to the eyes of the astonished spectators as the very charter of their salvation.

The procession having entered the church, a red cross was raised in the middle of the aisle, and the preacher mounted the pulpit to exhort the assembled multitudes to take advantage of the grace offered them by the pope. As soon as the discourse was ended, Tetzel, or his agents, presented the written indulgences for sale. These documents purported, that the sub-commissioner did, by the authority of Christ, of the blessed apostles Peter and Paul, and of his very holy lord, the pope, committed to him, absolve the purchaser, first, from all ecclesiastical censures whatsoever; and, secondly, from all sins, crimes, and excesses, however great they might be. "I remit to you," it declared,

"by this indulgence, all the pains which you would be condemned to suffer in purgatory: I re-establish you in the use of the sacraments, in the communion of the church, and in the innocence which you possessed at the moment of baptism, in such a manner that, were you now to die, the gates of hell would be closed against you, and those of heaven and glory opened to receive you; and if you continue longer on the earth, this grace shall be granted you whenever your last hour arrives."

It was with equal disgust and consternation that those who retained any sense of Christian holiness, beheld this terrible violation of every principle of their faith. But it required a boldness of spirit, a clearness of understanding, a self-denying devotedness of soul, to resist the evil, which never meet in a man, except they are given from on high, to consecrate him for an office of equal eminence and difficulty. The chosen vindicator of Christian truth and holiness, at the period alluded to, was Martin Luther. This remarkable man was born on the 10th of November, in the year 1483, at Esleben.* His father, who had originally been obliged to earn his bread by severe labour as a miner, was rendered almost independent at a later period of life, and obtained, through his high character for virtue and probity, the rank of a magistrate in the little town of Mansfield, the place of his abode.†

Having passed through the several stages of a scholastic education in the universities of Eisenach, Magdebourg, and Erfurt, he was admitted in the last-mentioned seminary to the degree of master of arts. About this time an event occurred which produced the most important effects on his character and dispositions. An intimate friend, as they were walking and con-

* Von Luthern und dessen Leben. Sacramliche Schriften, t. xxiv. p. 49. An attempt was made by the believers in astrology to prove that he was born on the 22d of October, when there was a certain malign conjunction of the planets. He could scarcely fail of being a heretic and reprobate, they said, with such a horoscope.

† Luther himself says, that his father, grandfather, and ancestors were all peasants.

versing together, fell dead at his side. It appeared to Luther as if the hand of God had been stretched out from heaven; and so strong was this impression upon his mind, that he resolved to devote himself thenceforth to a life of retirement and religious study.

The vow thus made was strictly observed. His father for some time opposed his intentions; but his thoughts were too entirely occupied with the solemn condition in which he seemed to have been placed to allow of his returning into the world. He accordingly entered the order of Augustine monks *, and in the deep seclusion of his monastery began that course of meditation and inquiry which elevated him to the highest rank, not only among the scholars, but the thinkers, of his country. He had reflected much, however, before he found an opportunity of making himself acquainted with the Scriptures. Such was the little regard paid to this source of knowledge by the theologians of his age, that, profound as were his convictions of the excellency of truth, and the holiness of the Christian faith, he had forgotten that the pure word of God can alone afford certainty to the witness even of the wisest and holiest of men. The discovery of a Bible, which lay neglected in some obscure corner of the monastery, freed him from this fatal ignorance. Rejoiced at his acquisition, he sat down to its perusal with equal devoutness and anxiety. In a few months his opinions underwent a vital change. Those which could stand the test of that burning and shining light, which leaves nothing doubtful or obscure over which it beams, found a new and fixed foundation; and those which supplied the place of old errors and superstitions, had an evident worth, and completeness of relation to the mighty interests of truth, which can belong to nothing less holy or divine.† Not long after this commence-

* He is supposed to have chosen this order from the veneration in which he held the character of Staupitz, the vicar-general, and on account of the great reputation which the order enjoyed for learning and sanctity.

† Luther did not neglect any of the ordinary means of knowledge while thus studying the Scriptures, as the only proper foundation of Christian doctrines. Melancthon says, that he read the schoolmen with great

ment of his inquiries, a dispute respecting the privileges of their order induced the Augustines to send him as their representative to Rome. The vices of the court and of the clergy filled him with disgust; and he alluded to this visit long after as one of the many circumstances which led to his hostility to the Romish church.

Having entered the priesthood, he was invited, the following year, to occupy the chair of philosophy at Wittemberg. An animating sphere of exertion was hereby opened to him; and he was in that state of mind in which exertion is generally most successfully made.* At all times active and inquiring, he had now the additional impulses afforded by the discovery of important truths; and his lectures attracted crowds of students from every class in the university. The strong feelings which inspired him on points of theology, hitherto unhandled by the teachers of philosophy, broke forth every now and then in expressions of doubt respecting the established creed; and his earnest eloquence, not wholly unmingled with sarcasm, produced the most lively sensation of curiosity and wonder.

At the strong request of his brethren, the Augustines, he was induced to receive, in 1512, the degree of doctor of divinity. This elevation in academical rank gave him additional motives for the study of theology, which he now pursued with continually enlarging views as to its nature and importance. Not content with the knowledge of Scripture, derived through translations, he began the critical study of Greek and Hebrew; and, in order to possess every available means for the illustration of the text of the Divine Word, he commenced

diligence. "*Nec tamen prorsus reliquit sententiariorum, Gabrielem et Cameracensem poene ad verbum memoriter recitare poterat. Dum multumque legit scripta Occam. Hujus acumen anteferebat Thomæ et Scoto. Diligenter et Gersonem legerat. Sed omnia Augustini monumenta et saepe legerat et optime meminerat.*" — *Vita*, p. 16.

* *Epist.* tom. i. p. 3. He says, in a letter written soon after his appointment, that he was thankful to God for his being so well situated; but that he felt oppressed by the perpetual study of philosophy to the neglect of theology.

therewith the diligent perusal of Augustine, and the best of the ancient fathers. In his lectures, the advances he hereby made became every day more apparent. His natural strength of mind would probably have led him to despise the sophistries and jargon of the Aristotelians of the age; but, confirmed in knowledge, he openly expressed his contempt of the artifices by which the learning of the schools had been employed to disfigure truth; and, freeing himself from all the control of art and scholasticism, he taught, in the plainest and most energetic language that could be employed, the simple truths of Scripture.

It was not without mingled distrust and anger that many of his contemporaries heard the opinions he expressed. Some could not endure to behold him enjoying a freedom in which their pride, their avarice, or their fears, prevented them from participating; others had an instinctive feeling of approaching danger, and would have been glad to discover a colourable pretence for silencing such a professor of theology. But Luther despised alike their envy and their power; and, taking for the subject of his lectures the Book of Psalms and the Epistle to the Romans, he discoursed on the doctrine of justification by faith with the energy of a primitive preacher of that grand and fundamental principle of the Gospel.*

Luther was thus employed when the agents for the sale of indulgences appeared in the neighbourhood of Wittenberg. The people of that city were not less

* How beautifully are his thoughts on this subject expressed in the following passage in one of his earliest letters:—"Igitur, mi dulcis frater, discce Christum et hunc crucifixum, discce ei cantare et de te ipso desperans discere ei: tu Domine Jesu es Justicia mea, ego autem sum peccatum tuum: tu assumpsisti meum, et dedisti mihi tuum; assumpsisti quod non eras, et dedisti mihi quod non eram. Cave ne aliquando ad tantam puritatem aspiret, ut peccator tibi videri nolis, imo esse, Christus enim non nisi in peccatoribus habitat. Ideo enim descendit de caelo, tibi habitabat in justis, ut etiam habitaret in peccatoribus. Istam charitatem ejus rumina, et videbis dulcissimam consolationem ejus. Si enim nostris laboribus et afflictionibus ad conscientie quietem pervenire oportet; ut quod ille mortuus est? Igitur non nisi in illo per fiduciam desperationem tui, et operum tuorum, pacem invemes; discce insuper eo ipso, ut sicut ipse sus cepit te, et peccata tua fecit sua, et suam justitiam fecit tuam."—*Epist. ix p. 11, 12.*

eager than the rest of their countrymen to obtain at the cheapest rate the remission of the pains and penalties due for their sins. Crowds accordingly hastened to the place where the indulgences were to be purchased ; and the same lamentable instances of fraud and human folly were exhibited as in the other towns of the diocese. It was impossible that a teacher of theology should witness such occurrences without noticing them in his addresses. Neither the learning nor the acuteness of so great a man as Luther was required to discover the infamous advantage taken of the credulity of the people ; and it would have been a violation of the most obvious duty for a theologian to suffer them to remain uninstructed in the doctrines so shamefully set at naught. The measures which he took on the occasion were not those of either pride or enthusiasm ; for the subject of indulgences had not occupied his attention ; and he appears to have been prompted, in the first discourses which he made respecting them, by the simple desire of warning the people against a manifest danger. What, indeed, could a preacher on justification by faith do in such a case ?

Happily for the Christian world, Luther was not of a disposition to remain contented with what he found it his duty to do when only partially acquainted with the case. His attention once awakened, he pursued the subject, whatever it might be, till he saw it in all its bearings ; and he had the resolution and the piety to act in every step of the discovery according to the measure of his knowledge. Finding the evil continually on the increase, he addressed an epistle to Albert of Brandebourg, in which he informed him particularly of the measures he had taken, and implored his assistance in repressing an abuse which appeared so destructive of Christian piety and morals. The arguments whereby he sought to instruct the people of Wittemberg on the subject of indulgences were contained in ninety-five articles, and these he also transmitted to the archbishop ; but he obtained no reply,—a circumstance

at which, perhaps, he had no right to express surprise. Albert was distinguished by the qualities of a prince and a courtier, rather than by those of a churchman: he was intimately connected with the pontiff; and it must have been generally known that he was not unwilling to recruit his treasures by any means in his power.

The measures, however, which Luther had taken were not unproductive of important consequences. Albert appears to have seized the earliest moment for acquainting Tetzl and his party with the proceedings of the professor of Wittenberg. A short time after the date of Luther's letter, the sub-commissioner published, at Frankfort-on-the-Oder, a series of propositions directly contradictory of those advanced by his opponent. They supported the system of indulgences in its greatest corruption; and Luther, instead of replying immediately to this attack, only put forth the statements advanced in his former propositions in a more extended shape. He at the same time wrote to the bishop of Brandebourg, his diocesan, and also to Staupitz, the vicar-general of his order. The latter had uniformly treated him with respect; but the former in his reply observed, that it would be better were he to confine himself to his duties, and cease from agitating questions which could only produce the most mischievous consequences to the church.

A. D.
1518. Little affected by these discouragements, or by the new adversaries which his propositions had raised against him, Luther ventured on the bold step of addressing the pope himself. He informed him that the preachers of indulgences were guilty of the most licentious abuse of doctrine; and that their conduct answered to the style of their sermons. Foreseeing that the steps he had taken would rouse their enmity, he warned the pontiff against receiving false accusations, and added, that Frederic, the elector of Saxony, was too wise and pious a prince to have protected him, had he been guilty of the errors laid to his charge; that the university of

Wittenberg agreed with him in the efforts he had made to moderate the conduct of the collectors; and that so far was he from want of respect for the authority of his holiness, that he would willingly submit to his judgment, not only his writings, but his life and his salvation; that he regarded whatever came from him as coming from Jesus Christ himself; and that he was ready to lay down his life if he considered he deserved such punishment.

The letter containing these humble and loyal sentiments formed the dedication to a treatise written in answer to the attacks made by Eckius and Sylvester Prierius, the former a professor of theology at Ingoldstadt, and the latter a Dominican and master of the sacred palace. In his controversy with these advocates of the church, both his knowledge and his ardour seem rapidly to have increased. The arguments advanced against him were as irritating to an honest apprehension as they were weak and unsupportable by Scripture. But though he allowed full scope to his natural warmth of temper in rebutting the ignorance of his adversaries, he entered into the argument with an evident feeling of its mighty importance; and endeavoured, by unfolding the fundamental principles of religion, to make men see the reasonableness of his conduct, and recall them to the love of those comforting and elevating truths on which the church of Christ was established at the beginning.

Attention now began to be generally drawn to the controversy; and the indignation of Tetzel and his supporters was greatly increased by the daily diminution of their influence and their profits. The common sense of the people, once awakened and disabused by the plain arguments of unguised truth, readily took part with Luther. They felt that the man who simply asked them why the pope, if he had the power of granting remission of sins, did not do it for charity rather than money, must have reason on his side. No answer could be given to such a question, so comprehensible to popular understanding as the question itself;

and the consequence was, that thousands who would otherwise have expended their money in the purchase of indulgences, began to consider whether true repentance and earnest prayer to God might not afford the better and safer method of salvation.

Things were in this state when the emperor Maximilian called a diet at Augsburg. The principal subject of inquiry at this meeting was the war with Turkey ; which now engaged the attention of most of the European princes, and especially that of the German and Italian potentates. Leo had sent cardinal Cajetan, as his representative, to the assembly, and had further charged him with the duty of admitting Albert of Magdebourg into the august office of a cardinal of the Roman church. These circumstances all tended to hasten the consummation of the great events which were on the eve of taking place. The strict union of the pontiff with his German allies gave them a mutual interest in the affairs of the church and the state. Each had his own especial reasons for watching with jealousy any attack on the other ; and Luther, by his freedom of speech, was become a dangerous enemy to every system which required either arbitrary power or fraud to preserve it in vigour.

Aware of the influence which he was daily acquiring, Maximilian wrote to the pontiff to desire his prompt assistance in silencing so bold a preacher of sentiments hitherto, or for many ages, unknown to the church. Thus called upon, Leo was obliged to take immediate measures, and to commence a process against the reformer, of whose power and proceedings he had as yet formed no adequate idea. Early in the month of August, Luther received a citation to appear at Rome within sixty days ; and soon after, the cardinal Cajetan was directed to receive his submission, or in case of his refusal to send him by force to Rome.

The situation in which Luther thus found himself placed was one of difficulty and danger. His enemies were no longer Dominican monks, or imbecile polemics.

They were the most powerful princes in Europe ; and it was evident that he must either at once pause in his career as a reformer, or prepare himself for suffering, and, perhaps, death. Maximilian, it is true, was not excited against him by the impulses of a blind bigotry ; he had been heard to speak of his propositions as worthy of the highest attention ; but he was too much involved in the cares of royalty to act according to what might have become, on inquiry, the fair decisions of his conscience. Even Leo himself is said to have expressed no slight respect for the talents of Luther ; and had he not become the slave of pride and ambition, his fine taste and natural good sense must have led him to take part with a scholar whose simple aim, at first, was to repress the licentiousness of a tribe of base, ignorant, and daring abusers of morality. But both these exalted personages conceived it essential to their safety and dignity to silence language which had already produced so much excitement throughout the principal states of Europe. In this they felt themselves sure of the co-operation of other princes. The only friend whom Luther possessed among men of power was Frederic, the elector of Saxony. This pious and enlightened prince fully comprehended the righteousness of his cause ; but he had no confidence in his ability to protect him against the pope and the emperor ; and the sole hope of safety which suggested itself to Luther, or his friends, was, that he might escape from the threatened danger by a speedy flight.

In this opinion he was joined by Staupitz, the head of his order ; a venerable man, whose views appear to have been long established on the justest views of evangelical doctrine. "The world," said this pious monk, in a letter to Luther, "is furiously enraged against truth ; it seems as if the hatred of the Jews against Christ were revived in our days : you must learn, therefore, to bear the cross which the Lord left to his disciples ; for you have few protectors, and they have little courage." To this he added, "My opinion is,

that you should quit Wittenberg for some time, and come to me, that we may live and die together. Your prince is of the same mind. Let this suffice. Let us then, not forsake each other, since all forsake us, as Jesus Christ, whom we follow, was forsaken by the world."

The citation issued by Leo rendered it obligatory on every member of the church, whether lay or ecclesiastic, to assist in delivering him to the proper authorities, should he not appear voluntarily before the court at Rome. Excommunication, and the forfeiture of rank and property, was to be the penalty for giving him refuge; and the only person exempted from the operation of this decree was the emperor himself. Frederic of Saxony saw, to the full extent, the difficulty which opposed his acting according to the dictates of his own feelings. Convinced of the truth and rectitude of Luther's proceedings, he would have rejoiced in supporting him against the machinations of his enemies; but the consequence of an open resistance to the sovereign pontiff would have been such as few princes of that age dare encounter; and the position of the elector of Saxony was far from favouring so perilous an undertaking. It was evident, on the other hand, that Luther must fall a sacrifice to the hatred of the Dominicans, and the power of their supporters, were measures not speedily taken to secure his safety. The difficulty of Frederic's situation was, in no slight degree, increased by the circumstance, that Leo had addressed to him a letter, in which he called upon him, by the respect due to his ancient house for its long tried fidelity to the church, to neglect no means that might be employed for the extirpation of the rising heresy.

Pursuing the only measures which afforded a means of safety to Luther, without endangering his own peace and dignity, Frederic determined on exercising to the uttermost the rights which he possessed, as a sovereign prince, for the protection of his subject. Addressing himself, therefore, to Maximilian, he demanded a safe

conduct for Luther to and from Augsburg. He also furnished him with letters to several persons of rank in that city. In these proceedings he was aided by the university of Wittemberg, which, in an epistle to the pope, afforded the strongest testimonies to the learning and piety of its persecuted professor.

Thus supported, Luther set out on his journey to Augsburg. He travelled on foot, and without attendants. On arriving in the city, he took up his lodging with the Carmelites, his brethren, the Augustines, fearing, it is supposed, to entertain a man so strongly suspected of heresy. For three days he remained unnoticed by the authorities. The only person who visited him was a servant of cardinal Cajetan, who called to see him, and express the great respect in which his master held his character and talents. Luther, as simple and ingenuous in heart, as he was powerful in intellect, was not in a state of feeling to be insensible to any expression of kindness. He received the Italian, therefore, with open arms, and would have forthwith accompanied him to the residence of the cardinal, had he not been warned of the danger of doing so by one of his acquaintances. Three days after, the same visitor again made his appearance, and inquired the reason why he delayed proceeding to the hotel of the cardinal. On Luther's confessing that he waited for the safe conduct of the emperor, the Italian rudely demanded whether he supposed the elector of Saxony would take up arms in his cause.—“I should grieve if he did,” was the calm reply.—“Where will you live?” was the next question.—“Under heaven,” replied Luther.—“If you had the pope and the cardinals now within your hands,” continued the unwearied questioner, “what would you do with them?”—“Treat them,” rejoined Luther, immediately, “with the profoundest honour and respect.”*

* Seckendorf quotes Luther's own account of this conversation, which he thus concludes:—“Si tu papam et cardinales in potestate tua haberes, quid esses factururus? Omnem, inquam, reverentiam et honorem exhi-

The safe conduct required of the emperor was at length brought him, and on the 12th of October he appeared before the cardinal-legate. So little inclined was he to evince pride or obstinacy, that he would have addressed that dignitary on his knees, had he not been prevented by Cajetan himself. The business of the day was then begun, by the cardinal's stating the conditions on which he was expected to make his peace with the church. These were, that he should retract his opinions; remain for the future in silence; and abstain from doing aught which could trouble the tranquillity of the Christian community. In naming the errors by which he had chiefly offended the pope, he divided them into two classes; the former consisting of those which regarded the doctrine of indulgences; and the latter pertaining to the doctrine of the sacrament, and of justification by faith.

Cajetan, like many dignitaries of the Roman see, prided himself on his skill in the use of those scholastic weapons, by which such good service had formerly been done in the war with truth and Scripture. Instead, therefore, of pursuing the more prudent course of exercising at once his legatine authority, he began a formal dispute with Luther on the subject of his supposed heresies. The sole foundation of his arguments was the bull of Clement VI. To this he referred as of divine force and authority; as not to be contradicted without the greatest impiety; and as being of sufficient importance to settle any dispute which might arise respecting either doctrine or discipline. Luther firmly contended that this decree was not binding on the consciences of Christians; that it falsified Scripture; and was nothing more than a confirmation of the subtleties and errors of Thomas Aquinas. He also added, that both the university of Paris and the writings of Gerson sufficiently contradicted the assertions of the car-

dinal respecting the supremacy of the pope. To which Cajetan replied, that the disciples of Gerson had been already condemned, and that the theologians of Paris should receive their proper chastisement.

The conference ended little to the satisfaction of either party. On the next day, October 13., it was renewed. Luther appeared before the court, attended by four counsellors of the emperor, a notary, and several witnesses. Before further proceedings commenced, he read a paper, in which he declared his respect for the Roman see, and the church at large, and his willingness to submit to what might appear its just decisions; but that he neither could nor might retract what was not proved to be contrary to the orthodox faith; that he was prepared to support his opinions before any tribunal whatever; but that he especially yielded to the decisions of the universities of Basle, Fribourg, Louvain, and Paris.

Cajetan showed no willingness to reply to this protestation; but resuming the argument of the preceding day, continued to press it in a lengthened speech, to which it was plain he did not intend that Luther should have the opportunity of making an answer. Staupitz, however, who had accompanied Luther to the meeting, demanded that he might be allowed to reply in writing; the reformer, thus encouraged, spoke to the same purpose, and added that they had disputed with him sufficiently at the previous audience. The cardinal found no means of escaping the difficulty in which he had involved himself, and the affected civility with which he dismissed his antagonist proved how gladly he would have retraced his steps.

Luther presented himself again the following day, and immediately proceeded to read the reply he had prepared to the arguments advanced against him. In this composition he unfolded, at some length, his opinions on the subject at issue, and adduced the reasons by which he considered they were supported. Of indulgences he said, "that the merits of Christ could not

form a treasure of such a nature, seeing that the application of these merits had never been committed to men, and that faith and repentance could alone give the right to a participation therein ; that the decrees of pontiffs might contain orders, and that when they were received as law, it was only on the supposition that they were in perfect accordance with Scripture and the fathers ; that the bull published by Clement VI. proclaimed a manifest error in speaking of the superabundant merits of the saints, since no one ever lived who had not reason to exclaim with St. Augustine, "Woe to the best life that is judged without mercy !" When he came to the article on justification, he said, "that faith is only a certain persuasion of the truth of God's words and promises ; that this faith justifies the sinner, because that it is the condition of the grace which God bestows on the soul, and by which we render that soul just and holy." At the conclusion of this exhibition of his sentiments on the great points of the controversy, he repeated his willingness to humble himself to the church, and besought the legate to employ his influence to procure him the favour of the sovereign pontiff, "that his holiness might have compassion on a soul which sought but for truth, and only refused to retract because it could not do so without prevarication."

Cajetan, unmoved either by the arguments or the humility of Luther, heard his defence with badly disguised anger, and, at its conclusion, resumed the discussion. He still found himself, however, an unequal match for so accomplished a divine and acute a logician ; and, having dismissed him from his presence, had recourse to Staupitz and another friend of Luther, whom he entreated to use their utmost influence in bringing him to a better state of mind.

A general idea appears to have prevailed at Augsburg, that, though the cardinal had thus dismissed Luther without any definite expression of his intentions, he was not in a disposition to favour his escape ; and that, notwithstanding the safe conduct granted by the

emperor, chains and a dungeon would probably be his lot.

It is impossible to say whether these suspicions were well founded. The cardinal, it seems, was wholly unable to decide what measures it would be right or prudent to pursue. Luther had powerful supporters; and he was himself at too great a distance from his superior to obtain immediate aid or support in case of resistance to his decisions. Luther, by his coolness and resolution, had wholly defeated the plans which might have been pursued, could he have been terrified into submission; and the pope had given him no instructions sufficient to authorise violent measures, whatever might be their necessity. At the earnest desire of Staupitz and others, Luther wrote to the cardinal in a style of the greatest humility, desiring pardon for having spoken irreverently of the pope, and offering to remain silent for the future, on condition that his opponents should be bound by the same obligation. Having despatched this letter, he sat down to the composition of a paper, which he called an appeal from the pope to the pope better informed, and despatched it as soon as finished, with another letter to Cajetan. No answer was sent by the cardinal to these communications; and this circumstance tending to confirm the surmises of his friends, he determined on seeking safety by flight; and on the morning of October 19., that is, after waiting four days for the legate's further citation, he took his departure from Augsburg.

The day had not dawned when Luther set off, and he would not have been able to effect his retreat, but for the kindness of one of the senators, who assisted him in passing the gates of the city. That he had a strong presentiment of the dangers which environed him, appears from the rapidity with which he pursued his journey. A horse had been provided him by one of his friends, but he had neither boots nor spurs; and such was his fatigue when he stopped at night to rest, that on leading his horse into the stable

he fell upon the litter, wholly unable any longer to support himself.

His situation was now in every way embarrassing. It was beyond the power of human wisdom to foresee what would be the final result of his labours; and it was natural for him to expect that the same personal consequences would attend his bold attack on the reigning church, as had followed the attempts of other individuals inspired by a similar spirit. He had had the resolution to present himself before the legate, and to declare his determination to persevere in the cause he had adopted; but though resolved to continue in the open profession of the truth, whatever might be the result, this did not lessen his sensibility to the perils which threatened him, or to the responsibility he had taken upon himself in calling to account a church like that of Rome.*

On his arrival at Wittenberg he found that the elector was involved in the greatest doubt and perplexity. Cajetan had the character of a haughty and determined zealot; and the letter which he sent to Frederic, shortly after Luther's departure from Augsburg, breathed equally of subtilty and determined resentment. The prince at first expressed a wish that the reformer would seek a place of refuge beyond his dominions. This was intimated to him by Spalatinus; and he immediately replied that he would obey the command of his sovereign as a decree from heaven, and would prepare himself for exile the moment the threatened sentence of excommunication arrived from Rome. "I every day expect to receive the anathemas of the pontiff; and I am ready to go forth, like Abraham, not knowing whither I go: yet not so, I know well, for God is every where." Frederic, however, induced, it is probable, partly by the dictates of conscience, and

* Seeckendorf, p. 87. His epistle to Staupitz was evidently written under considerable depression of mind. He saw the struggle going on which was to decide his fate; but his faith strengthened him. "Farewell, most sweet father," he concludes, "and commend my soul to Christ." He speaks both in this, and in the letter written at the same time to Spalatinus of the difficulty he had experienced in obtaining the prince's permission to publish an account of what had taken place at Augsburg.

partly by the indignation he felt at the conduct of the legate, altered his sentiments, and intimated to Luther that he desired him to retain his station in the university. "I know not," said the latter, in respect to this change, "what I ought to desire; for if I remain here I shall not have the liberty of saying or writing what I think; whereas, if I depart, I shall say all, and offer myself a sacrifice to Christ."

Confirmed in his resolution by the judgment of the university of Wittemberg, and the immense body of his subjects, who were now declared friends of the reformer, Frederic wrote to Cajetan in terms of cool and distant respect. "He had sent Luther," he said, "to Augsburg, according to promise, in order that he might, if wrong, be convinced of his error, not forced to recant by any tyrannical proceedings." — "The most orthodox universities," he added, "assured him that his doctrine was pure and catholic; and he was, therefore, determined never to drive from that of Wittemberg a man to whose learning and ability it owed so much of its present reputation." He also sent, about the same time, instructions to his minister, Pfeffinger, at the court of the emperor, to solicit that sovereign's attention to the case of Luther, and to obtain for him a hearing before a German tribunal.

Luther, in the mean time, was not idle with his pen. To correct the public opinion respecting what had taken place at Augsburg, he published a full account of the conference. He also prepared an appeal from the expected sentence of excommunication, and an answer to a new production from the hand of that weakest of zealots, Prierias. These works were no sooner issued from the press than they were seized upon by the people, who read them with an avidity which afforded a remarkable proof of the deep interest universally taken in the dispute. Tidings of the impression thus produced by the continued exertions of the reformer were not long in reaching Rome. Leo found himself obliged to act, but with extreme caution. He therefore issued a bull, in which he again authorised the preaching of

indulgences, and declared that they were founded on the ancient doctrine and discipline of the church. Not a syllable, however, was inserted respecting Luther himself. The commissioners, on the contrary, were charged with having abused the authority they possessed, and with having published errors, while they had been only sent to preach the word of God: a manifest indication that the Roman church was beginning to tremble at the rising strength of public opinion.*

A. D. 1519. Shortly after the issuing of this bull, Charles Miltitz, the pope's chamberlain, arrived at the court of Saxony. He was charged with the office of presenting to Frederic the rose of gold given by the pontiff as a special mark of his favour; but the main object of his stay in Germany was to raise a more vigorous opposition to the spread of reform. To aid him in this business, the pope had directed letters to Pfeffinger, in which he described Luther as the child of Satan, and besought the counsellor to employ his influence with the elector, that he might no longer endanger the honour of his ancient house by the protection of such a preacher of heresy.†

The death of the emperor Maximilian, and the subsequent contest for the imperial crown, between Charles of Austria and Francis I., so wholly engrossed, for a time, the attention of public men, that the affair of Luther was allowed during the interval to remain in abeyance. Frederic of Saxony exercised the most important influence at the election, and increased thereby both his personal and political authority. This proved of the greatest use to the cause of the incipient reformation; and we thus meet with one of those numerous instances in which the providence of the Almighty has rendered the business of the world tributary to his designs in promoting the diffusion of truth and holiness.

* Seckendorf, pp. 96—98. This writer conjectures that the Roman court expected to induce Luther to avail himself of the means of escape by this air of moderation; but it might have been clear to them that no man of common honesty could have remained silent from such a plea; this very bull, though censuring the commissioners, confirming the principles themselves on which they had proceeded.

† Steidan, *Hist. Reform.* t. i. l. i. p. 23.

CHAP. III.

MELANCTHON AND ERASMUS. — CONFERENCE BETWEEN LUTHER AND THE POPE'S NUNCIO. — LUTHER ADDRESSES LEO. — DISPUTATION AT LEIPZIG. — ECKIUS AND CARLOSTAD. — LABOURS OF ERASMUS. — FIRMNESS AND DISCRETION OF LUTHER. — ADDRESSES THE EMPEROR AND THE BISHOPS OF MENTZ AND MERSBOURG. — LEO PUBLISHES A BULL AGAINST LUTHER. — HIS DEFENCE. — BURNS THE PAPAL DECREES.

It was greatly to the advantage of Luther that the dispositions of the people, at this period, were all in favour of learning and inquiry: it was equally so for his comfort, that the most distinguished scholars of the age took a cordial interest in his proceedings, and manifested the most generous sympathy with him in the difficulties of his situation. The two greatest names of this century, Erasmus and Melancthon, appear joined with that of Luther in the history of his times as those of brothers, bound together by the duties of a common calling. Each had his peculiar office; each had gifts and inclinations which gave him an individual character and vigour; but they were raised up to labour for the attainment of one great object, and to lead mankind by the combined force of their genius and their piety to the reverential acknowledgment of evangelical truth.

Melancthon*, whose father was a celebrated orator, had early distinguished himself by his extensive acquaintance with the Greek language and literature. While still a youth he enjoyed the distinction of being made professor of rhetoric at Tubingen; at which place he had taught about four years, when Frederic invited him, on the recommendation of Capiton, to accept the Greek

* Beckendorff, p. 62. He was, says this writer, "exili corpore et contentibili fere specie."

professorship in the university of Wittenberg. On his arrival in that city, his small stature and generally mean appearance produced an impression very unfavourable to his popularity ; but he required only an opportunity for the display of his genius to inspire universal affection and respect. His address to the university, on being admitted to office, excited equal astonishment and delight ; and among his auditors no one was more ready to express his gratification than Luther.* On all the most important points of learning and religion, these great men felt the same ; while in their personal character there was just sufficient difference to produce that interchange of feeling, and sense of mutual dependence, which seem almost necessary to the establishment of a strict and lasting friendship. Their acquaintance, auspiciously begun, quickly ripened into the most brotherly affection ; and the name of Melancthon will inspire reverence wherever the memory of Luther is honoured, and the reformation regarded as a holy and profitable work.

The strength of Erasmus lay in the acuteness of his judgment : this rendered him equally great as a moralist and a wit. His learning, though varied and extensive, was not more than he found the means of employing in his bold and sarcastic discussions ; and he enjoys the reputation of having been the first to display in clear, intelligible characters, the essential difference between an established religion and its established representatives. Luther and Erasmus were not brought personally together, and had fewer harmonising tendencies of intellect than there were existing between the former and Melancthon ; but they knew each other's worth, and the extent of their powers ; nor could either the one or the other have received a much higher encouragement than that of mutual admiration.

Luther had the satisfaction of finding in Melan-

* *Epist. lib. i. p. 57.* Luther himself speaks of the contrast between his appearance and the power and beauty of his mind. " We put aside," he says, " the consideration of his stature and person, and honour and admire only the inner man (*rem ipsam in eo*)."

than a ready disposition for taking part with him in his labours. Nor was Erasmus idle. That celebrated scholar addressed letters to the duke of Saxony, the archbishop of Mentz, and the cardinal Campegio. In all these, he spoke warmly of the piety, the wisdom, and the courage of Luther, and enlarged in the plainest terms on the pride and corruption of his enemies.

But encouraging as were these testimonies to his conduct, Luther still saw himself surrounded with perils. The pope's nuncio was now at the court of the elector, and had begun that course of operations which it appeared to the boldest observer could only terminate in the discomfiture of his intended victim. Frederic had, indeed, intimated his resolution not to yield up Luther to any attempts that might be made to carry him to Rome: but his determination was, from prudential motives, limited to this, of not exposing his subject to a foreign tribunal. When he found, therefore, that he must either hazard the resentment of the papal court, give up Luther to its vengeance, or invent some method of lessening the force of the blow, he had formed the expedient of declaring Luther a prisoner, and then offering to bring him before any court in Germany, properly constituted for deciding his case. Miltitz, however, was not so confident of success as he felt on entering Germany. The wishes of the people were strongly engaged in the cause of Luther and reform; and he confessed, that should he attempt to lay hands on the schismatic, it would require 25,000 men to convey him to Rome.

The policy of Miltitz was therefore changed. He now resolved on proceeding with more caution than it had been usual for the ministers of the church to adopt in cases of resistance to its will. Had this plan been earlier pursued, it might have saved the Roman pontiff's the loss of their ancient power: in the present state of affairs it could only encourage the rising spirit of intelligence to bolder and more open exertion. Luther was softened by the appeal made to him, in a meeting to which

the nuncio invited him at Altenbourg, and which took place in the house of Spalatinus.* Shortly before their interview, Miltitz had severely rebuked the miserable and degraded Tetzel for the evils which the church was suffering through his shameful abuse of its privileges. The unfortunate monk, deserted by his employers, and pointed at by the multitude as the very incarnation of fraud, had been obliged to seek an obscure retreat in the monastery of St. Paul at Leipzig. In the letter wherein he excused his attendance at Altenbourg, he complains that Luther had raised against him not only Germany, but Poland and Hungary; that there was no spot where he could be safe; that when he preached at Leipzig, he has met with only menaces and contempt; but that whatever he might have to suffer in the cause of the holy see, he would defend its privileges to the last. The nuncio, in his conversation with Luther, expressed respect and even affection for the reformer, and listened with patience to his defence. At the conclusion of their meeting, he besought him to submit to the judgment of the pope; and thereby secure peace both for himself and the church. To this Luther objected; but proposed that judges should be appointed in Germany, and that the credit of both parties should be saved, by the dispute being allowed to drop gradually into forgetfulness. It was at last agreed that the nuncio should procure an order from Rome, prohibiting the continuance of the controversy, and referring the final decision of the affair to the German prelates.

Luther acted with due caution in the whole of this interview, neither irritating the papal messenger by any intemperate expression, nor allowing him for an in-

* Seeckendorf, p. 105. Luther was very averse to this meeting, from a fear that it might produce some bad effect on his appeal from the pope to a general council. In the account which he gives of the interview to Staupitz, he describes the nuncio as fairly confessing the bad reception he had met with, and the great defection of the people from the church at Rome. "I beseech you pray for me," he concludes; "for I am a man involved in society, and troubled with surfeits, irritation, negligence and numerous other distresses, beside those which belong to my office."

stant to suppose that he would ever retract the opinions he had advanced: but neither the reformer nor the Roman court could now repress the excitement their dispute had awakened throughout the best portion of Europe. It was no longer in their power to say, Let there be peace: they were constrained by every consideration of their declared sentiments to let the people, on either side, declare theirs; and such was the impulse that had been given to inquiry, that had they ceased altogether from carrying on the dispute themselves, it would still have been propagated, and led in the end, probably, to nearly the same results. Luther was the chosen instrument of Divine Providence; but the providence of God does not depend on its instruments, and had Luther now fallen, it would have been his own honour, not the cause of the reformation, that would have suffered.

It is difficult to determine whether the firmness of Luther did not subsequently yield more than it ought to the desire of conciliation. In his letter to the pope, written soon after the meeting above described, he employs expressions which could only be lawful on the supposition that he believed Leo to be indeed the representative of Jesus Christ, the absolute dispenser of his power in the universal church. "I am again obliged," says he, "to address your holiness — your exalted majesty; I who am the lowest among men, and the very dust of the earth: I beseech your holiness to open your ears as those of a father, and of a vicar of Jesus Christ, favourably to receive the laments of a sheep, of which you are the pastor." Having then defended himself against the charge of disobedience, he exclaims, "What shall I do, holy father? I know not what course to pursue: I cannot support the weight of your indignation; and I see not how to free myself from the burden. They desire me to revoke my treatises, and this I would instantly do, could your object be thereby effected."*

* Epist. 98. lib. i. "*Ece hominum et pulvis terræ. . . . Quare* 13.
VOL. I.

The habit of regarding the Roman pontiff with boundless respect, had led to a style of expression, whenever his name was mentioned, which now only astonishes and disgusts. But Luther had been bred up with all the notions of a monk, and in the strictest order of ecclesiastics. Of the feelings thereby inspired, he was not able at once to divest himself; nor would he, perhaps, have manifested such an unaffected nobility and genuine freedom of soul, if he had instantaneously ceased to honour what he had been taught to reverence under all the impressive circumstances of religious study. But as his understanding discovered with greater clearness the true foundations of the Christian church, he gradually learnt to conquer the prejudices of his early years; and that extreme dread of the papal power which had kept him, as a matter of conscience, from becoming its declared antagonist, when once shaken, vanished altogether. Hitherto he had contended not so much against Rome as its corrupt ministers, whose conduct and discourses he could not for some time be persuaded to regard as recognised by the church. If he employed a language, therefore, when addressing its chief, which now offends by its undue submissiveness and exaggerations, it ought not to be taken as a sign of insincerity or wavering resolution. The career of Luther, moreover, affords many striking proofs of his peculiar sensitiveness of feeling. Energetic and daring as he was when called upon either to act or to suffer, he was open to every solicitation of friendship, and could rarely resist even a seeming proffer of peace and amity on the part of his opponents. Answering with ready warmth to the appearance of kindness, he yielded himself at once to the comforting sense of returning tranquillity; and the apologetic tone of the language in which he spoke, may be usually traced to the anxiety he felt to re-

ternas acuire Christi vicarias aures huic ovicule tue interim clementissime accommodare dignetur beatitudo tua, et balatum meum huic officiose intelligere." Strong, however, as these expressions are, not the slightest intimation is contained in the letter that he was willing to retract.

move any distrust respecting his willingness to be at peace.*

But the period was arrived for his standing forth among mankind as the vindicator of Christian liberty, not by treating with the heads of the Roman church, but by asserting its absolute necessity to the spiritual interest of the world, that they should no longer be intrusted with its dispensation. Notwithstanding the proofs which existed, that it would be for the advantage of Rome to allow the controversy to drop, the restless and irritated spirits of its champions prevailed over this more prudent policy, and Luther found himself obliged to prepare, with more earnestness than ever, for meeting his opponents in debate. The principal controversialist at the present time was Eckius, a ready, haughty, and accomplished disputant.† Strong hopes were entertained by the Romish party, that could the weapons of so subtle a logician be brought against Luther, the reformer would be obliged to give up many of his most dangerous positions. Luther and his friends, on the other hand, were as confident that the cause of truth would be no otherwise than benefited thereby; and, in accordance with the sentiments thus entertained on either side, it soon became understood that a meeting would take place at Leipzig, between these two celebrated theologians, early in the summer.

The preparation for the intended dispute had an important effect on the mind of Luther. After a cautious perusal of the papal decrees, he confessed to Spalatinus, that he could not decide whether the pope was anti-christ, or the apostle of Christ, so fearfully was Christ crucified in these decrees. Eckius had defended the

* Epist. 99. lib. i. In this letter, written a few days after, to Spalatin, he declares his perfect readiness to show all respect to the pope. "Let them only leave me the Gospel, and they may have all the rest."

† Eckius was on terms of strict intimacy with the principal advocates of reform; and was evidently regarded by some of them as a person capable of becoming a brave and powerful advocate of just principles. "I trust," says Carolstadt, in a letter to him which breathes only affection and respect, "I trust you will understand my meaning, and out of a Saul become a Paul. I love you heartily: may I perish if I wish you dead, or that the least unhappiness should befall you."

doctrines of the Roman church, in thirteen propositions, directed immediately against the opinions of Luther ; and in the reply made to these, the reformer had openly declared that the authority which the pope exercised over the churches rested solely on the decrees which had been passed by the pontiffs themselves. Frederic and his court appear to have dreaded the consequences of this bold statement of his opinions ; and Luther was obliged to show on what grounds he had ventured to advance it. Even this afforded him new means of strength. The more he studied and reflected on the subject, the clearer were his convictions ; and thus the engine whereby the whole fabric of Roman superstition and tyranny was to be shaken became every day more capable of its work.

Erasmus wrote to Luther, about this time, to encourage him in his labours, by informing him of the constantly increasing interest taken in his proceedings. " They will not believe," says he, alluding to the monks of Louvain, " that I have not a part in the composition of your works. Some of them hope, by ruining me, to destroy the reviving taste for literature, which they hate with a mortal hatred, as inimical to the majesty of theology ; a thing infinitely more important in their eyes than Jesus Christ. Their clamours, their menaces, their lies and artifices, are inconceivable : I could not have believed that theologians were capable of such madness."—" They are beginning, however, to relent," he adds ; " fearing, perhaps, the pens of the learned, but still more, their own consciences. I would paint them, as they deserve, did not the charity of the Gospel forbid. Savage beasts usually grow mild when treated with kindness ; but these only become the worse from gentle treatment. You have in England several persons, and those of the first rank, who greatly esteem your works ; and even here, there are some ; but I scarcely know more than one preacher who preaches Christ ; the rest discourse only of fables, or their own interests. I have begun to read your com-

mentary on the Psalms : it pleases me much ; and I trust the world will be greatly benefited by its publication."

On the 8th of June, that is, shortly before the day appointed for the disputation, Luther and Eckius repaired to Leipzig.* They were accompanied by numerous supporters and friends. Among the most distinguished on the side of Luther were Melancthon and Carlostad ; the challenge of Eckius having been originally intended only for the last of the three, who, therefore, was appointed to begin the debate. This celebrated discussion took place in the hall of the castle. Application had been made to the university for its countenance and assistance ; but for some time it sternly refused to authorise the proceedings : the bishop of the diocese, moreover, forbade its being carried on in the city ; and the duke of Saxony and the senate had to exert their authority to the utmost to secure the disputants from the indignity of being silenced by his arbitrary enactment. An ordinance was even fixed on the church doors threatening the parties engaged with excommunication ; this the senate, by the duke's orders, had immediately torn down, and the man who thus ventured to insult the civil authorities was thrown into prison.†

It having been agreed that secretaries should be appointed to take notes of the arguments advanced on each side, the business of the meeting was opened by an address from the Greek professor, Peter Mosellam,

* Cochlaus, *De Actis et Scriptis M. Lutheri*, p. 12. This writer expresses himself with great admiration of the courage of Eckius, who, he says, came to Leipzig accompanied only by a single servant, when he had every reason to fear robbers and assassins, and the treachery of the Lutherans. He ridicules the latter also, for bringing their books with them : — "Wittebergenses non solum multos comites ; sed et libros subsidiarios secum adferentes, quasi Lipsiæ non essent libri, si quibus opus foret," p. 13. *Von der Disputation zwischen Eck. Carlostad et Luthero. Sämmtliche Schritten*, tom. xv. c. v. p. 955. Seckendorf, p. 120.

† *Epist. Lutheri*, 114, et 116 lib. i. Eckius informed Luther of the permission being gained, in a letter dated Iugo'stadt, Feb. 19, 1519 ; and concludes his epistle with the observation, that, instead of having thus to express his willingness to meet him in dispute, he would far rather hear that he had changed his mind, and was willing to submit himself obediently to the apostolic chair, to Leo X. the vicar of Christ. "God be with

who eloquently exhorted the combatants not to forget that they were engaged on a subject in which the discovery of truth was the grand object; and that as the victory could not, in reality, depend upon human ingenuity, neither would he who conquered merit glory, nor he who suffered defeat, shame; for the victorious would but communicate the light which he owed to God, and the vanquished would be delivered from the power of error under which he had fallen through the infirmities of the human intellect.* Another of the scholars present, Cæsar Phlog, then addressed them, and a hymn having been sung, the dispute was commenced by Carlostad and Eckius.

The fundamental doctrine of Christianity loses its force, in proportion as it is mixed up with the belief, that good can have an independent origin in the corrupted human will. Were this possible, a man might renew himself; an idea which, however supportable on the suppositions of moralists, has certainly no place in the Christian system. Carlostadt started with the proposition *that every good work is altogether from God*: to which Eckius objected, *that every good work is from God, but not totally or absolutely*. In the conduct of the dispute, Eckius, it is generally allowed, manifested great readiness of language, and much ingenuity in discovering those nice distinctions in which the logic of the schools so much delighted. Carlostad, on the other hand, failed in that power of expression and easy reference to his sources of knowledge, which are so essential to a public speaker. The consequence was, that the advocate of the Romish doctrines had greatly the advantage in his appeal to that portion of his audience who preferred ingenuity of speech to soundness of learning and doctrine. But Carlostad enjoyed the high

you, my dear Martin," he adds; "let us pray for each other, and that God may enlighten us."

* The excitement occasioned by the expected contest is well shown in a letter of this learned man to Erasmus. "Great preparations," says he, "are being made for this battle. On one side will be ranged the Augustines, on the other the Dominicans, who are always to be seen where their interests are likely to be assailed."

satisfaction of convincing the more candid of the listeners that he was defending a proposition, the truth of which must become the more evident, the more genuine learning, and sound, unsophistical reasoning were employed in its illustration.

Several days were spent in the contest between Carlostad and Eckius. At its conclusion, the latter summoned Luther to the debate. Many of the friends of the reformer used their best efforts to dissuade him from engaging with such an adversary. They represented that he would probably be led into using expressions, or propounding opinions, which, however true they might be, it would savour of great imprudence to employ, or make known, at such a time. He had, moreover, they reminded him, no safe conduct, and the sudden display of zeal might consequently involve him in inextricable difficulties.

But Luther was rarely influenced by considerations of a personal nature ; and, notwithstanding the representations of his friends, he readily accepted the invitation of his boastful antagonist. He possessed many of the qualifications for a public disputant, in which Carlostad was conspicuously deficient. His memory presented, in ready succession, the stores he had amassed in a long course of theological study ; he had a fearlessness of disposition, which made him rejoice in encountering difficulty ; and the intense anxiety he had so long experienced found its best relief in the free, open, and courageous declaration of his feelings. Thus impelled, he threw aside every fear but that which arose from the holy dread of not being worthy of defending the truth ; and Eckius had ample reason to tremble at the strength of the adversary whom his own vanity alone had, in the present state of affairs, called into the field.*

* Both Luther and Eckius offered a protest respecting the holiness of their motives in entering upon this disputation ; the former declaring, that he was constrained thereto by the necessity of defending himself against the attacks of his opponent, and complaining that more of his adversaries were not present ; and the latter, that he contended only for

The subject of the debate between these expert disputants, was derived from the last proposition advanced by Eckius, in the thirty articles he had lately published, and which had been answered by Luther in thirty others, distinguished by the usual vigour of his style and argument. Eckius commenced the discussion by contending, that the authority of the pope being essential to the preservation of the church must necessarily have had a divine origin; and passing from this to other propositions of a similar kind, insisted, especially, that they were guilty of grievous error who asserted that the church of Rome was not superior to all others till the time of pope Sylvester; seeing that he who had the faith of St. Peter, the prince of the apostles, and sat in his seat, had always been recognised as his successor, and as the vicar of Jesus Christ.

Luther replied, that the authority of the popes rested on decrees, the earliest of which was only about 400 years old, while the history of more than ten centuries, the acts of the council of Nice, and the Scriptures, proved that these decrees were themselves opposed to the spirit of the Gospel. Eckius immediately took up the argument, and expressed his wish to confine the discussion, at first, to an examination of the authority of the pope. Luther replied that he should have preferred passing over this portion of the subject, as being likely to involve matter which, out of respect for the pontiff, he was unwilling to bring forward; that he was sorry, therefore, to be forced into the question; but that as such, was the case, he should have been glad to meet there all his adversaries, who acted basely in shunning this opportunity of fairly examining the truth. Eckius rejoined, that the burden of the dispute ought to rest on the author of the quarrel, which had originated in the assertion, that before the time of Sylvester, the pope was not regarded as superior to

the honour of the papal chair, and him that sat thereon, and to bring back, the erring to truth and obedience. *Von der Disputation zu Leipzig. Sämliche Schriften*, tom. xv. pp. 1069, 1070.

other bishops ; and that pope Pelagius had twisted many passages of Scripture to answer his own purpose. He then proceeded to accuse Luther of having taken part with the heretical Bohemians, with Wickliffe and Huss, who had stated, that it is not necessary to salvation to believe that the church of Rome is the sovereign of all the churches.

It required equal care and penetration to argue with an adversary like Eckius. Luther, ardent as he was, appears to have been fully convinced of this ; and immediately replied to the accusation of schism and heresy, that he favoured not schismatics ; but that whether the opinion in question had been advanced by Wickliffe or not, it could not be resisted without condemning Gregory of Nazianzen, Basil, Epiphanius, Cyprian, and the whole of the Greek bishops, who had never acknowledged the authority of the bishop of Rome ; that it was certainly known, that the see of Rome did not exist till eighteen years after the ascension of Christ ; and that, therefore, the universal church had been for some time without any head, if the pope was its necessary and supreme chief. He also denied that Peter was superior to the rest of the apostles ; and to this Eckius assented, making a distinction between the apostleship and the episcopacy of the saint, and contending for his superiority in respect only to the latter. Luther rejoined by quoting Gal. ii. 6—11., in which he contended it was proved that St. Paul owed neither his apostolic nor his episcopal rank to Peter ; and further added, that it was forbidden by the decree of a council to call the bishop of Rome a universal bishop. Eckius acknowledged the truth of this decree ; but remarked that though the pope was forbidden to be called bishop universal, it was not forbidden that he should be called bishop of the universal church.

In the next stage of the dispute they considered the subject of purgatory. Luther here went so far as to acknowledge, that there was some semblance of a proof of this doctrine in the saying of Christ respecting the

sin against the Holy Ghost. The Saviour speaks of this sin as pardonable neither in this world nor the next; whence it seems deducible that other sins may obtain remission in the future state. He also allowed some force to the passage in the second book of Maccabees, in which prayer and sacrifice for the dead are described as works of piety. That he placed, however, but little confidence in these arguments, appears from his having immediately after stated, that the Scripture first alluded to ought probably to be interpreted only as a general declaration, that the sin against the Holy Ghost will never be pardoned; while the passage last quoted occurred in a book not admitted into the canon. Eckius cited 1 Cor. iii. 13.; but Luther contended, that this text might be better interpreted as referring to the last judgment.

It was not till the following meeting that the debate touched on the doctrine of indulgences. Luther had asserted in one of his propositions, that indulgences being the annihilation of good works, it could not be contended that they are a benefit to the church without the grossest sin. On this Eckius remarked, that that could not be pernicious which had been introduced by the authority of the church and the sovereign pontiff, who could not err. Luther replied that he did not consider indulgences evil in themselves; that he had condemned the abuse of them only, and that his proposition was self-evident, for the fruits of repentance being good works, it could never be wise in the church to free its members from their performance. Eckius did not deny the propriety of much of what Luther thus said; and the two disputants amused themselves for a time in the mutual ridicule of the superstitions and errors which had been introduced by the commissioners on their own authority.

The discussion of the next day, July 12., was devoted to the subject of penitence; which, according to Luther, can only be sincere and holy when it springs

purely from the love of God. Eckius contended that repentance might be acceptable and efficacious, though the fear of punishment was its origin. Luther agreed that fear might do much, not only in making a man cease from evil works, but in prompting him to the exhibition of virtue; but he insisted that true penitence does something more, inasmuch as it changes the affections, converting the whole heart, and inspiring it with the love of holiness and the love of God, the most perfect of virtues, and which is necessary to render any other virtue acceptable in his sight.

On the evening of the 13th the dispute turned upon the subject of absolution and satisfaction for sin. Eckius contended that God, though he may pardon a sin, reserves to himself the right of punishing the offence; and instanced the example of Adam, who was himself pardoned, but whose posterity suffered the heaviest penalties for his fall; as the subjects of David did, at a later period, for the offence of their sovereign. Luther replied, that these very instances supported his conclusion, which purported, that though the Almighty has sometimes commuted eternal for temporal punishments, he has never allowed a human being to escape the retribution so denounced; and that, therefore, though the pope may have power to remit the penances he has himself imposed, he can have no authority to cancel the punishments inflicted by God. The conclusion from this was, that if the doctrine of a purgatory be received, the pontiff could never free the souls suffering therein; this their deliverance depending solely on the mercy of the Creator. In respect to the doctrine of absolution, Eckius contended that some species of sin could only be absolved by the bishops; and that by this regulation, the sin so pointed at were rendered more terrible and odious to men's consciences. Luther replied with equal truth and severity, that he was in error in supposing that such could be the effect; for that it was generally known, that many crimes of the worst description were tolerated in the palaces and courts of prelates.

This was the last point of dispute between Eckius and Luther. Carlostad now resumed his station in the contest, and continued engaged with the champion of Rome two days longer. The subject of their debate was the same as that originally proposed, and each disputant upheld, as before, those opinions on grace and free will which best accorded with his general system of doctrine. John Lange, professor in the university of Leipzig, pronounced, at the conclusion of the conference, a formal eulogium on the talents and learning which had been displayed on this occasion by the parties engaged. To Eckius he gave the praise of eloquence, acuteness, and readiness of argument; to Luther, especially, that of learning, vast and profound, candour, boldness, and purity of character.*

It is at all times difficult to determine who has gained the victory in a dispute carried on like that at Leipzig: but it is next to impossible that a fair decision should be given while the opposite parties still retain that peculiar animosity which belongs to the commencement of hostilities. For either to determine against its chosen supporter would be little less than to give up the cause, and rarely, under any circumstances, has this been the case at the conclusion of a hot debate. The few who honestly seek to determine the question, without any other consideration than that of obeying the truth, discover, at once, the immense difficulty which attends such a task. Could the relative decrees of argumentative correctness be examined, as distinct from that of the propositions which form the foundation of the controversy, knowledge and acuteness only would be required to enable men of education to assign the prize. But this can hardly be the case, when the subject is of such a nature, that each of the arguments successively advanced is, in the main, a re-assertion of the original proposition; and when, to ingenuous minds, the determination as to which of these propositions is the

* *Sämtliche Schriften*, tom. xv. p. 1241. A higher eulogium was never passed upon man than that delivered by the orator on Luther.

true one can never cease to be of vital interest. We accordingly find, that while the universities of Cologne and Louvain, which were celebrated for their loyalty to Rome, lost no time in assigning the palm to Eckius, that of Paris refrained from giving its opinion till two years after the conference; and that of Erfurt from declaring its sentiments at all.

But whatever might be the difficulties originally attending the decision of this important dispute, the least suspicious kind of testimony was shortly after given to the force and correctness of Luther's reasoning. Thousands of his countrymen owned themselves convinced by his arguments, in spite of the acuteness of Eckius, and the power of his party. Hitherto the mass of the people, though willing to share with Luther in reprobating the corrupt preachers of indulgences, had retained their awe of the pope and his authority. They now began to doubt his right to supremacy; weighed with care the reasons on which his advocates claimed for him the attribute of infallibility; and no longer confining their questions to the later corruptions of the Roman church, freely debated whether there were not features in its constitution which demanded a universal and fundamental change.

The vanity of Eckius prompted him to assume the air of a victor in the late conference: while Luther, who was too deeply interested in the subject to feel personally as a disputant, became daily more resolute, more open in his speech, and more willing to encounter the dangers which seemed coming upon him. To the frequent and bolder expression of his sentiments he was led as much by the provocation of his adversaries, as by the ardour of his own feelings. Eckius left no method unemployed by which he imagined the character of his opponent could be injured. In a letter which he addressed to Frederic of Saxony, he persuaded that prince to burn the writings of Luther as those of a man wholly unworthy of his confidence and protection. The conduct of Frederic on this occasion

was wise and generous. Putting the letter into the hands of Luther and Carlostad, he left them to answer its contents as theologians, while, in his own reply, he spoke as a sovereign whose main wish it was to establish peace and religion, by the suppression of whatever fomented a fierce and dogmatic spirit. Eckius answered the defence of Luther and Carlostad in a manner which proved how little he regarded the temperate counsel of Frederic ; but his treatise was ably rebutted in two publications ; the one bearing the form of an apology, from the pen of Melancthon ; the other, that of a satirical letter, by Œcolampadius, who succeeded in putting together almost every circumstance which could sting the vanity of a man like Eckius. Luther himself replied to his attacks, by publishing a work, in which he unfolded the doctrines supported in his theses with particular references to Scripture.* To these expositions of doctrine he added a short account of what had taken place at Leipzig, and appealed to the common sense and candour of mankind to justify his assertion of the truth.

So little inclined, however, were the enemies of reform to admit the force or reasonableness of such an appeal, that their opposition seemed every day to assume some new characteristic of bitter hatred and wrath. At the instigation of a canonist of Leipzig, Luther was again accused of being the firm ally and correspondent of the heretical Bohemians. This accusation rendered him more odious than ever in the eyes of the Romanists. The appellation of Bohemian was equivalent to the worst designation that could be heaped upon heresy and schism ; and he to whom it was applied immediately became an object of that instinctive dread which is almost equally shared between the power of evil and its name. Luther had given occasion to this new attack by receiving letters from some learned men at Prague, who, rejoiced at the

* Seckendorf, pp. 123. 137. Epist. Lutheri, 122. lib. i.

tidings of his struggle against the power which Huss and Jerome had defied with their blood, could not resist the desire of expressing their sympathy with him in his bold and arduous undertaking.

But notwithstanding the violence of his enemies, the cause of Luther and reform continued to advance by sure and rapid strides. Erasmus rendered it considerable service at this period by the publication of his version of the New Testament, which he had translated into Latin from the original Greek. A work like this, supposing it to be executed with learning and fidelity, had the highest claims to praise from the ministers of religion. It was only regarded, however, by the doctors of Louvain, and other Romanists, with opprobrious suspicion. Profoundly ignorant of biblical criticism, they contended that the Vulgate was superior to any of the Greek manuscripts both in purity and authority: that to correct the Scriptures by originals which came from so disputed a source was to injure their value; and that if any alteration in the text of the Gospel was necessary, it would be far more proper to correct the Greek by the Latin, than the Latin by the Greek.

As little acceptable to these unfortunate bigots was the new edition of the works of Jerome, put forth by the same eminent scholar. Learning, under any shape, filled them with apprehension. They saw in it the power of giving light, and light they desired not either for themselves or others; while the activity indicated by its increase shook to its foundations the whole system of their faith. Their perplexity was extreme. The day was advancing: not one of the broad shadows under which they had slept kept its place: every quarter of the horizon seemed ready to pour forth its ray of light, and not a beam that had reached the earth could be driven from the objects on which it fell. In this extremity the university of Louvain called to its assistance the most distinguished of its members, Martin Dorpius, a man of acute and ingenuous mind. Prepared for the

controversy by an honest conviction that Erasmus had done all the injury to religion which had been laid to his charge, he addressed him in a strain of earnest, and, occasionally, bitter reproof: Erasmus replied with equal force and dignity. In a general apology for his version of the New Testament, he says, "What! shall we not be allowed to restore the text of Holy Scripture, according to the opinions of the primitive fathers, unless a general council be called, while in the mean time the same text is daily corrupted, and no punishment is inflicted upon those that do it? Was the approved version done by the order of a general council? Was it not composed and published before it had the approbation of the fathers of the church? And the same thing may happen as to mine, though I neither wish nor expect so much. But it cannot be said that the vulgar version hath been approved by the judgment of a universal council. If it had, all the fathers would have made use of it, and all the copies that were made use of at that time would have agreed, which is not the case. If it be said that the councils made use of that version, this assertion is not true as it respects either the councils of the ancient or the Greek church. Are different versions of the Sacred Scriptures more dangerous than different interpretations? Will they not allow that every thing may be changed? They cannot deny that we are permitted to correct the faults therein; why then do they not examine whether the alterations we have made be just or not? My design was not to make a new edition of the Gospel, but to restore the ancient edition, without permitting it to remain corrupted by what is new."

Dorpius had too much honesty to resist conviction. After a brief continuance of the dispute he fairly acknowledged that the scholastic system was inapplicable to the great ends of religious inquiry, and immediately began the study of Greek and Hebrew for the purpose of making himself acquainted with Scripture, pure and unclouded by human error. He profited

well in this pursuit, and the remaining years of his life were devoted to the teaching of theology, on the principles which he found revealed in the divine word. His introductory lecture on the Epistle to the Romans was delivered as early as the year 1517, but did not appear in print till two years after, when it tended greatly to promote the cause against which its author had at first so strenuously laboured. "With how much care," he exclaims in this lecture, "with how much pertinacity, with what watchings and labour do we all study Aristotle, and that not merely in his propositions, but letter by letter; and why should we deem it vain or useless to expend similar exertion on Saint Paul?"

Luther afforded a noble proof, by his commentary on the Galatians, which appeared at this time, that the study of Scripture is worthy of the closest application of the most enlightened intellects. The appearance of such a work could scarcely fail to excite attention at any time; but it now supplied a want, and relieved anxieties which seemed every day on the increase. Religious feeling is not easily excited; but when once roused, under circumstances which render it generally communicable, it becomes the strongest of sentiments, and bows the hearts of multitudes as the heart of one man. Luther's method of proceeding was happily as wise and cautious as it was energetic. He might have poured forth treatise after treatise, exhibiting the errors of Romanism, and asserting the purity of the evangelical system, and by their means he might have roused not only the attention, but the most ardent enthusiasm of the people. A man less wise or sincere than Luther would have done this, and the church would, probably, have fallen under the sudden attacks of a bold and excited populace; but there would then have been no preparation for its re-establishment: the destruction of the ancient edifice would have satisfied the newly awakened passion, and the ruins only would have remained to provoke the scorn and increase the triumph of infidelity. By

his temperate and measured proceedings the reformer avoided these dangers; by presenting the people with large portions of Scripture, rendered demonstratively applicable to their wants by a copious commentary, he confirmed them in the knowledge, the deep, spiritual conviction of truth, thereby making them masters of the reasons on which alone it is lawful for the members of either church or state to resist established institutions.

The aspect of affairs was pregnant with indications of important events. Luther could not but feel that on him depended the direction of that flood of new opinion which had flowed forth at his summons. This gave him a sense of greatness, a resolution which elevated his thoughts above timid counsels, and made him equal, in many of the essentials of power, to the most exalted men of the age. Influenced by the sentiments thus inspired, he addressed himself to the new emperor, and with not less dignity than truth claimed his attention and support. He founded his apology, he said, for addressing so great a prince, on this circumstance,—he was employed in promoting the interests of Christ: to this, he added, that his writings had offended many persons, but without reason; that his adversaries had forced him into disputes when he would willingly have remained unknown, and that his sole desire was to devote himself to the study and the preaching of the pure word of God; that there were witnesses of the highest integrity ready to bear testimony to the truth of what he asserted, and that his zeal in the cause of holiness had been the sole origin of the dangers with which he was surrounded, of the troubles and insults heaped upon his head during the past three years; that he had left no means untried to restore peace; that he had besought his opponents to point out in what respects he differed from the divine doctrine of Scripture, but that they had only replied to him by abuse and calumny, and expressed themselves in a manner which convinced him that their sole

object was to oppress both him and the Gospel; that on this account he had resolved to follow the example of Athanasius, who in similar circumstances had sought an asylum in the sanctuary of the laws; that he now, therefore, besought his majesty to take upon himself the defence of Christian doctrine, and to afford him protection against injustice and oppression; that he asked for no favour if on a fair trial he should be convicted of error; that all he asked for was a full and honest examination; and that the affair did of right come under the jurisdiction of his majesty, who was appointed by the providence of God to do justice, and to support the weak and injured against the powerful and unjust.

This letter to the emperor he followed up by making a similar appeal to the various orders of the state; to the cardinal archbishop of Mentz, and Adolphus bishop of Mersbourg.* The address to the former of these prelates was remarkable for its expressions of humility, and affords a striking proof that Luther still retained the most affectionate regard for whatever was venerable in the institutions of the church. In reply to these assurances of attachment and loyalty, the archbishop professed that he had read with pleasure his humble expressions of regret at the discord which his proceedings had occasioned; that he would not condemn him for supporting what he deemed to be true, provided that he argued with modesty and mildness; that if he laboured sincerely in the cause of piety, his labours would be fruitful; whereas if he abused the gifts with which God had endowed him, divine vengeance would surely overtake his proceedings. He had, he confessed, never read his works; but he had heard of their contents, and grieved that such subjects were discussed therein, as the primacy of the pope, free-will, and other such things, the examination of which could contribute in no ways to the promotion of piety; while other holy doctrines, as those which respected the Lord's supper,

* Seckendorf, pp. 147—150

and which had been confirmed by the uniform consent of the church, were brought into doubt and dispute.

The bishop of Mersbourg expressed himself in a similar manner; blamed him for treating the pope with so little respect, and for employing in his controversies such violent and irritating language. But his chief cause of complaint was the doubt which Luther had thrown on the practice of the church, in the administration of the Lord's supper; this had occasioned, he said, the greatest displeasure in his diocese; and he trusted that the genius displayed in the advocacy of such errors would shortly be turned to employments more calculated to promote the good and prosperity of the church.

It is evident, from the tone of these letters, that the character and exertions of Luther had produced an impression on the minds of the most powerful of his opponents, which did not allow of their addressing him simply as a schismatic. The power he had acquired was felt throughout Germany; and the possessors of power are seldom insensible to its presence, wherever, or under whatever form, it may appear.

But whatever might be the impression produced by the influence of Luther in the other states of Christendom, at Rome the indignation against him was continually on the increase. There his name excited feelings which partook equally of the hatred of bigotry and of the fierce malice of trembling tyranny. For some time, these feelings were suppressed by the doubts and fears which arose at the contemplation of the vast multitudes devoted to the new opinions: the emissaries employed by the court confirmed these apprehensions. Miltitz, the bearer of the rose of gold, found that once valued gift so little esteemed in Germany, that the elector saw fit to excuse himself from receiving it in person. Instead, moreover, of being able to awe the reformer by the dignity of his office, or the threats or exhortations which he uttered, he found him the leader of a party ready to pursue the boldest measures in his

favour. The message, in which the nuncio described what he witnessed, could hardly fail of convincing both Leo and his court, that no sudden, no violent, attempt at correcting the evil would succeed. Proceedings, therefore, were delayed; and had it not been evident that the period would soon be passed in which correction was possible, Leo would probably have contented himself with expressing his indignation among the zealous attendants on the court. But the time was arrived when the dignity of Rome demanded immediate support; bishops and archbishops, cardinals and mitred abbots, called aloud for assistance against the spirit of schism which seemed knocking at the gates of their palaces. Why had the church, they exclaimed, thus long delayed the infliction of the punishment so richly deserved? Why had its arm been held back, when, by a single blow, heresy and schism might, as in old time, have been driven from the sanctuary?

Urged on by these complaints, Leo was induced to address a letter to Frederic of Saxony, in which he awarded him the warmest praise for certain sentiments expressed in his name by Ditleben, his ambassador at Rome. After reminding him that, in refusing to associate his name with that of Luther, he only acted in conformity with the character of his family, Leo broadly asserts that the reformer ought to be regarded not as a follower of Jesus Christ, but as a servant of the devil; that his ambition had made him mad, and that he was only endeavouring to renew the heresies of John Huss and Wickliffe, whose sole object it was to flatter the wishes of the people, and who, by false interpretations and glosses, had given occasion to sin, and done injury to many of the most important institutions of the church. He added, that he had for some time borne with the temerity of Luther, in the hope that he might repent; but that, as his patience and indulgence had produced no fruit, he must now pursue those measures which the urgency of the case demanded: that he had, accordingly, consulted with the cardinals and other grave personages,

and had drawn up a bull, dictated by that Holy Spirit which had ever inspired the proceedings of the Roman church ; that he had sent him a copy of this instrument, in order that he might form a right judgment of the monstrous nature of the errors which this minister of Satan was in the daily habit of propounding ; that he might then endeavour, in the first place, to oblige Luther to humble himself, change his conduct, and make a solemn and public retractation of his heresies ; and that, in the next, should he refuse to recant within the time specified, he might commit him to prison, in order thereby to save both his own family and the country at large from the disgrace and danger which attended the spread of such a pestilent disorder.

The bull here spoken of was published the 15th of June, 1520. It opened with the words of the psalm, " Arise, O Lord, defend thy cause," and presented the supposed errors of Luther under forty-one propositions. The principal of these were, that it is heresy to say, that the sacraments of the new law justify those who oppose no obstacle thereto ; that it is to tread Jesus Christ and St. Paul under our feet, to say, — that sin remains not in a child after baptism ; that the division of penitence into contrition, confession, and satisfaction, is founded neither on Scripture nor on the authority of the fathers ; that the contrition which arises from the examination and abhorrence of sin, by which a penitent spends the remainder of his life in bitterness of soul, considering the extent and multitude of his sins, the loss of eternal happiness, and the punishment of hell, serves but to render a man a hypocrite, and increase his guilt ; that when we desire to confess all our sins, it appears as if we wished to leave nothing for the mercy of God to pardon ; that a man is absolved when he believes himself to be so ; that in the sacrament and remission of sins, if there were not a priest to perform the necessary offices, a woman or a child might render them ; that when any one approaches the eucharist, on the ground of having confessed, and because he feels

conscious of no mortal sin, and has prepared himself by supplication, he eats and drinks his own damnation ; but that if he believe he shall receive grace, this faith alone will render him worthy of receiving the eucharist ; that they are in error who regard indulgences as useful and salutary ; that Christians should rather be taught to love than to fear excommunication ; that these words of Christ to St. Peter, " Whatsoever you shall bind on earth," applies only to what the apostles did in this world ; that even a just man sins in all his good works ; that a good work, whatever it may be, is a venial sin ; that, owing to the secret pride of our hearts, no one is certain that he is not continually committing a mortal sin ; that free-will, since the introduction of sin, is but an empty name, and that man sins mortally when he acts according to what is in him ; that purgatory cannot be proved by any of the canonical books of Scripture.*

Luther had long been prepared for the anathemas of the pope. It may be regarded as an important circumstance in the history of his life, that Providence allowed him sufficient intervals between the several trials of his strength to prepare for their approach. Had the thunders of the Vatican burst upon his ear too suddenly, or at the commencement of his labours, his habits of early reverence might have laid him open to all the terrors they were intended to inspire : but he had learned to estimate their force ; he was not ignorant that they might injure him, and even lead to consequences from which the generality of men would shrink with extreme dread. But he knew what he had to meet : there were no shadowy forms flitting before his imagination ; the pope had no longer the likeness of a heavenly crown

* Luther immediately informed Spalatinus (Epist. 196) of the arrival of the bull, and spared no expression of utter contempt for this now useless instrument of papal tyranny. " I despise it," says he, " as a lying and impious document, the mere invention of Eckius. You see Christ himself condemned therein. . . . I shall treat it as a forgery. . . . O would that Charles were a man, and that he would treat these devils as they deserve ! . . . I rejoice with my whole heart to suffer for so good a cause ; I am not worthy of such affliction ; but I am freer than ever, being now fully convinced that the pope is antichrist, and that his throne was set up for Satan."

upon his head ; the dungeon of which he held the keys was the dungeon of an ordinary gaoler ; and the condemnation he pronounced depended solely for its validity on his power to open and shut the doors of the common prison. And for this Luther cared little. He felt that to be able to suffer any thing at the hands of those who cannot harm the soul was one of the first requisites in the character of a reformer. His assurance, that the cause for which he thus stood forward must in the end prosper and promote the glory of God, afforded him a species of satisfaction fully sufficient to counterbalance any natural fear ; the hour of trial, therefore, found him ready, and he went on his way rejoicing.

The papal bull was a confirmation of the dogmas on which the ministers of the Roman church had established its worst corruptions ; Luther, consequently, felt himself more than ever in the situation of a controversialist. Assuming an air of defiance, he prepared an appeal from the pope to a general council : this appeal he grounded on the assertion, that the pontiff had condemned him without having examined his arguments, or convinced him of error ; that he sought to lead him into a denial of the necessity of faith in the sacraments ; or to declare that he preferred his own opinions and human imaginations to Scripture, and would not yield to the authority of a council. He resigned himself to the indignation of the moment, and now proclaimed the pope a bold, presumptuous, haughty tyrant, who in reality despised the church, and was, therefore, anti-christ.

Previous to the publication of this appeal, he sent forth his celebrated treatise, entitled " Of the Captivity of Babylon." In the preface to this work he speaks with joy of his daily advance in the knowledge of divine truth ; and adds, that whereas at first he modified his opposition to the proceedings of the Roman hierarchy from reverence for its antiquity, he now regarded its power but as the reign of Babylon, or of Nimrod the mighty hunter. The most important part

of the treatise is occupied with arguments on the sacraments, — their nature and number. Instead of seven, he allowed of the divine institution of three only ; that is, baptism, the eucharist, and penitence ; but the last, he confessed, agreed not with his own definition of a sacrament ; which, according to sound theology, requires a divinely appointed sign and divine promises.

In treating of the doctrine of transubstantiation, he is seen evidently contending with opposite principles of conviction. On the one side, the literal meaning of Scripture seemed to demand implicit faith in the real presence of Christ ; while, on the other, the contradiction which this dogma offers to the general simplicity of evangelical truth, and the analogy of scriptural language, together with the circumstance that it had afforded a basis for the worst superstitions of the Roman church, strongly inclined him to exclude it from the articles of his creed. But the words of our Lord, "This is my body which is given for you," and, "This is my blood which is shed for you and for many, for the remission of sins," admitted not, in his opinion, of an interpretation wholly figurative. While he openly confessed, therefore, that he with difficulty believed the real presence, he ventured not to reject this portion of the established faith ; but still asserting the rights of reason and the senses, affirmed that the bread and wine retained their proper nature as before consecration.

The pen of Luther was now perpetually employed. He found that the emperor Charles had allied himself too closely with the monkish party in his dominions to listen to any appeal in favour of reform. Abandoning, therefore, the hope of procuring his powerful assistance, he summoned his energies for a closer and more decisive conflict with the enemies of truth. The university of Cologne, seconded in its proceedings by that of Louvain, received the papal bull as a signal for expressing itself with unbridled fury against the inquiry he had insti-

tuted. At the latter university a formal appeal was made to the magistrates of the town for permission to burn his books; and this permission was granted on the payment of a considerable sum out of the university chest. A similar attempt was made at Antwerp and Mentz, but it failed; and at the latter place the experiment so excited the indignation of the populace that the zealots who undertook it narrowly escaped with their lives.

Luther possessed as quick and determined a spirit as the boldest of those whose names stand conspicuous in the annals of reform. No sooner had he learnt what had taken place at Louvain, than he resolved on manifesting a contempt for the bull and decrees of Leo, equal to that with which the theologians of the university had treated his writings. On the tenth of December, the professors and students of Wittenberg assembled at his call, in the great square of the city; and the summons being given, the canon law and other instruments of ecclesiastical oppression were committed to the flames.

This proceeding had not been undertaken without careful consideration; and the next day Luther publicly declared from the pulpit that the act was his, and that they who duly regarded the value of their souls would free themselves without delay from papal domination.* The announcement, thus made, was followed by an apology, in which he stated, at length, the reasons on which he acted. These were principally, that the burning of bad and dangerous books was authorised not only by ancient custom, but by scriptural example; that he acted but according to his conscience as a Christian and a theologian when he resisted impiety and error; that the negligence of others in this respect would be no excuse for him, were he backward in the performance of his duty; that the pope and his associates were so desperately wicked, that they not only

* Luther observed, that the burning of the decretals was but child's play; that it would be better if the pope himself, that is, the Romish chair, with all its doctrines and follies, were burnt together. Von Verbrünnung der Bücher Lutheri. Sämliche Schriften, tom. xv. p. 1936.

resisted pious and salutary advice, but condemned the doctrines of Christ and his apostles ; that he did not believe his books had been burnt by order of the emperor, as was stated ; and that, as the tidings of what had taken place might lead many timid minds to conclude that he was rightly treated by his adversaries, he had thought it fit to pursue this method of retaliation to restore and confirm the spirits of his followers. In conclusion, he expressed his earnest hope that the world would no longer allow itself to be deceived by lofty-sounding names, and the pretensions of those dignities which were only created for the purpose of ostentation ; but that it would fairly examine the impious and destructive errors which prevailed in every part of the papal decrees.* The sentiments here expressed were still more solemnly asserted in one of his lectures on the Psalms delivered about this time. "The ministers of Christ," said he, "can take no middle way ; they must either resist the reign of error at the expense of their life, or renounce eternal life by not resisting it. For me, I prefer encountering any danger in this world to burdening my conscience with the sin of a weak and criminal silence. Wherefore, I protest that I hold this prostituted Babylon in abomination ; and this will I declare to my brethren as long as God be pleased to spare me."

It was thus that Luther from day to day continued to press forward in his righteous and heroic course. The feelings of the man combined with the holiness of the saint to support him in his labour. He had naturally a hatred of oppression and falsehood ; and, under other circumstances, would probably have been as brave an assertor of his country's rights, as he now was of Christian liberty and the privileges of the Christian church. In the conduct of the pope and his emissaries, he beheld the working of principles which tended to the destruction of whatever is dearest to the mind of

* Sleidan, tom. i. p. 86. Beausobre, tom. ii. l. p. 31. Fleury, Con. tom. xxv. l. 36. n. 80.

a free and upright man. The claims of conscience involve every claim of our nature, both moral and spiritual: to allow them to be resisted is to allow ourselves to be dishonoured before men and angels. Of this Luther had the deepest and most vital conviction, perhaps, of any man of his age; and when he was called upon to retract his opinions, while he still continued to believe them true, and to suffer the grossest indignities, because he refused to lie to God and his soul, the glowing spirit of uprightness and honour which characterised his nature burst forth, and proved itself sufficient to dare the worst efforts of the apostate church.

CHAP. IV.

REMARKS ON THE PAPAL POLICY. — PREPARATIONS FOR THE
DIET OF WORMS. — LUTHER APPEARS IN THAT CITY. — HIS
DEFENCE. — IS SEIZED ON HIS RETURN, AND CONVEYED TO
THE CASTLE OF WURTEMBERG.

THE efforts made at this period to support the power A. D.
of the Vatican were as badly planned as they were base 1521.
and tyrannical. It might have been easily foreseen,
that the man who could not be terrified at the prospect
of imprisonment and death would hardly desist from his
purpose at such exhibitions of malice, as the burning
of his books, or the anathematising of his name. Not
less clear must it have been, that to send controver-
sialists into the field against him was to make those
arms available in his defence which ought by a politic
silence to have been blunted and turned aside. The
error committed in these proceedings began now to be
apparent; but the policy of Rome was little improved
by the warnings it thereby received. Its efforts were
still marked by the indecision of a tyranny too anxious
to conceal its weakness to use even what strength it had
left. Instead of pursuing the measures which might
yet have awed a large portion of Christendom into
dread of its authority, it endeavoured to raise the power
of princes against Luther by persuasion and sophistry.
This would at best have been but a slow and uncertain
method; but as affairs now stood, it could only serve
to precipitate events. To the sovereigns who were
thus solicited, it made the weakness of the papacy too
apparent for its future interests. Whatever aid they
might be induced to render it in the present necessity,
it taught them that the simple operation of public
opinion was rapidly depriving it of the power before
which, a few ages back, their ancestors had so often

trembled. It thus eventually lost the strongest bulwark of its authority, and had thenceforward to pursue a course for which no church or other institution can be fitted which has not for its foundation the perfect law of equity and truth. But one alternative was at the beginning open to the pope. This was either to stop the abuses complained of, or at once exert the ancient authority of the church, and silence the preacher of reform by the infliction of its weightiest penalties. If it was ever expedient to attempt such a method of defence, the only moment was at the commencement of the danger. At a later period it became perilous to act with promptitude, though inexpedient to display dependence on the assistance of the civil power. The only means of safety now available were those offered by a fair and candid treatment of the great question respecting the state of the church. Had the sovereign pontiff at this juncture possessed the courage and discretion proper for his station, he would have sternly kept the right of judging the reformer in his own hands. Instead of issuing anathemas, he would have summoned Luther to Rome with a sedate and paternal assurance of safety. He might then have gathered from his own lips the full extent of his intentions: might have softened the asperity of the controversy, by many concessions which had no real connection with his authority; and, taking the cause of reform into his own hands, might have re-established by one grand stroke of policy the genuine popularity and dominion of his see.

But the later pontiffs had no spirit to form great designs. They were slaves to their own selfish views and passions. Whatever be the charges against the popes of Rome at an earlier period, they cannot be accused of having forgotten the interests of its church. With all their pride, their superstition, and tyrannous violation of the rights of conscience, there was an earnestness of devotion to the cause of their see; a unity of purpose in their actions; a thorough sense of ecclesiastical duties, which claim respect, in as much as

they could none of them have existed in so high a degree, through a long succession of pontiffs, without a great and frequent sacrifice of personal wishes and intentions.

The state of affairs now rendered it absolutely necessary that measures should be taken for their settlement. In the present condition of things, not only the power of the church but that of the state appeared to be defied. Neither the princes of the church nor the princes of the empire knew how to act; and a single free, courageous, and righteous man seemed about to overturn the established system of centuries.

It was at length decided that Luther should be summoned to make his defence before an assembly of princes and dignified ecclesiastics in the city of Worms. The emperor, who purposed being present at this diet, yielded to the urgent request of the elector of Saxony, and consented to furnish Luther with a safe conduct to, and from, the place of assembly. But so far were the partisans of Rome from feeling gratified at the prospect thus afforded them of vindicating the justice of their cause, that it now became the main object of the papal legates to prevent the appearance of Luther before his judges. Alexander, the principal supporter of Roman interests on this occasion, addressed the emperor and the assembled princes, at a meeting held February 13. 1521. In his speech he stated that Luther had broached as many falsehoods as would serve to burn 100,000 heretics; that he had defended Huss and Wickliffe; denied the presence of the body of Christ in the sacrament; set Christians free from all government and laws; sinned against the lower world through the rejection of purgatory; against heaven, in as much as he would not believe an angel, if he spoke otherwise than himself; against the clergy, for he raised all Christians to the dignity of the priesthood; against the saints, since he would not acknowledge their writings; especially those of Dionysius the Areopagite; against the world, for he would not acknowledge that

the worst criminal was rightly condemned. "How can one say," exclaimed the orator, "that he teaches the truth of the Gospel, when he speaks altogether contrary to the church and the fathers of the church? Many call him good and pious; but heretics have always been the greatest hypocrites; and a pious man would not oppose himself to the doctrines of the church. Do his books contain several good things? Yet ought the books of the heretic always to be burnt. In vain would a safe conduct be given him, in order that he might make his defence, for he has resolved to reject instruction, however offered." He concluded, by earnestly praying the emperor not to hear him, and cited the history of the heretic Eutyches in confirmation of his argument, that evil only could result from allowing him an audience.*

But notwithstanding the eloquence of the legate, and the strength of the party which he represented, Charles resolved on fulfilling his first intentions. The arrangements for Luther's appearance at Worms were expedited, and the reformer took his way for the place of meeting. That he was fully aware of the peril to which he thereby exposed himself, appears from several passages in his letters written at this period. To Spalatinus he says, that he would appear, whatever were the dangers of such a course. "I shall certainly not return, nor will I attempt to escape: that blood-thirsty papacy will not rest till it have destroyed me. But to Worms will I go, though the gates of hell and the powers of the air were against me. Yea I would go, though there were as many devils in the city as there are tiles on the houses."

Strong, however, as was the impression on his mind, that death awaited him at the termination of his journey, he pursued his way with a dauntless and cheerful spirit. It had been intimated that he must neither preach, nor otherwise publish his opinions on the road to Worms; but he treated this order with

* Sleidan, liv. iii. Seckendorf. Sämtliche Schriften.

contempt, and not only preached at Erfurt against the merit of pilgrimages, and other works of a similar kind, but published the sermon. On his arrival at Oppenheim, in the vicinity of Worms, he learnt that the bull, which consigned his books to the flames, had just been published there, and that the general impression on the minds of his friends was against his appearing before the diet. But Luther smiled at their representations. His confidence in the justice of his cause increased as he drew nearer the scene of trial. The grandeur of his views inspired him with a resolution that now hourly assumed more and more of the character of sublimity. Ancient history affords pictures of patriotic virtue, in which the human spirit is seen rejoicing in the noble consciousness of freedom, and devotion to its cause; but Luther was animated, at the same moment, by the loftiest views of truth, the profoundest love of holiness, and the most generous affection for his race. He had devoted many years of painful study and inquiry to the pages of Divine revelation: he found that the doctrines which they contain, and the knowledge of which is the medicine for human sorrow and infirmity, had not been fairly communicated to the world; he had called the keepers of the heavenly oracles to account for their negligence and their fraud; he had wrested the keys of the sanctuary from their hands; had proved to mankind the enormity of their corruptions; and was now on his way, the greatest of human heroes, to meet, with the simple arms of truth, the banded enemies of its purity. Could we draw the portrait of Luther with colours that would properly represent him as he now appeared, we would paint him clothed in celestial armour; his loins girt about with truth; the sword of the Spirit in his hand; his heart defended by the shield of faith, and his head with the helmet of salvation.

Luther entered Worms on the 16th of April, and was summoned to appear, the following day, before the emperor and the members of the diet. On his pre-

senting himself to the assembly, Johannes Eckius*, the jurisconsult appointed for the occasion, informed him, in a short address, that he had been cited to appear there to answer two inquiries: the first, whether he acknowledged himself as the author of the volumes spread before the assembly; the second, whether he desired to defend or retract the opinions therein contained. On this being asked, Jerome Schurff, a jurisconsult of Wittenberg, and who had the boldness to act as Luther's defender, desired that the titles of the books alluded to should be read. This desire being complied with, Luther expressed his readiness to answer the former question in the affirmative; but, in respect to the latter, he observed, that it was one of great importance; and, as it ought not to be answered without deliberation, he requested sufficient time to decide upon the proper reply. Eckius rejoined, that as he must have known the purpose for which he was summoned to appear at the diet, this excuse to obtain delay ought scarcely to be allowed; but that the emperor, out of pure clemency, would grant him till the following day to prepare his answer.

At the appointed hour, Luther took his place before the assembly, and, addressing himself to his august judges, besought them to attribute any seeming want of respect, of which he might be guilty, to his little acquaintance with the world, or with courts. "With respect to what I have taught," he said, "I have desired to publish nothing but for the glory of God, and the good of man." He added that he readily acknowledged himself the author of the books before him, supposing that nothing had been added thereto by others. With regard to the second question he observed, "The books which I have written are not all of the same kind, or on the same subjects. In some, I have treated only of faith and piety; and my adversaries themselves bear

* This was not the celebrated disputant, but the official of Treves. He is said, however, to have hated Luther as bitterly as his namesake. Epist. lib. i. Acta Lutheri, sec. 88. (213.) Seckendorf.

so favourable a testimony to this portion of my works, that, should I offer to retract what is contained therein, I should but expose myself to the charge of sin and error.* There are others in which I have censured the papacy, and the doctrines of the papists, who have greatly disturbed the peace and holiness of the Christian republic. For who sees not how miserably the consciences of Christians have been tormented by the laws and decrees of the popes? Or who can deny the frauds and artifices which they have employed to pillage every part of the world, and especially Germany; setting no bounds to their tyranny or their exactions? Were I to consent to the suppression of these books, I should be aiding the establishment of this tyranny; and the evil would be so much the greater when it was known that I was led thereto by the authority of the emperor and the princes. Lastly, the remaining portion of my works consists of those which have been written against individuals employed in defending the corruptions of Rome, and who have not ceased to heap calumnies upon my character. I acknowledge that I have therein spoken with somewhat more of anger than is fit; but I pretend not to be a saint: it is not myself, but a system of true and holy doctrine that I have undertaken to defend. Still, I have nothing to retract: it would be but to open a door for their insolence. I would not have it supposed that by saying this I desire to represent myself as free from error: it is a part of our common humanity to err; and my only defence shall be to adopt the words which Jesus Christ used, when struck by one of the servants of the high-priest,—‘If I have spoken evil, bear witness of the evil.’ For if Jesus Christ, who was perfectly free from any taint of guilt, refused not to bear the witness of a vile menial against him, how much greater reason have I, wholly sinful in my nature as I am, and so liable to error, to hear whatever can be objected against me or my doctrine? In the name, therefore, of that which is most holy, I pray that

* Steidan, liv. iii. pp. 92—94.

he who has aught to testify against my doctrine would straightway make it known, and convince me of my errors by the word of Scripture. Let him do so, and, instead of persevering in my opinions, I will be the first to cast my books into the fire. Let this suffice to prove that I am not led on by a blind temerity of spirit; but that I have cautiously weighed both the importance and the danger of my proceedings. It is even a great satisfaction for me to discover that my teaching has given rise to many troubles and scandals. Jesus Christ himself declared, that the preaching of his Gospel would produce divisions and struggles even among the members of the same household. For you, then, it is, illustrious princes, to weigh well the measures which ought to be taken in this affair, and to consider whether, in condemning the doctrine which is offered to you by the special grace of God, you will not be drawing upon Germany the most terrible of evils: you ought to be cautious, moreover, not to let the government of the young and newly-elected emperor, who presides over this assembly, commence under bad auspices, by giving, at such a time, an example so pernicious to posterity. Scripture affords ample proofs, that when earthly counsels and mere human prudence prevail over wiser maxims of government, states soon fall to ruin. I say not this, wise and illustrious princes, with a desire of prescribing that which you ought to do, but to perform my duty to Germany,—the land which has given us birth, and which ought to be dearer to us than life. In conclusion, I beseech you to take me under your protection, and to afford me your assistance against the violence of my adversaries.”

The manly and sedate spirit which had dictated these words made a powerful impression on the assembly. Eckius at once discovered the feeling which prevailed; and, turning towards the reformer, with a countenance intended to express severity and scorn, exclaimed, “You have not replied to that which has been asked: you are not here to call into doubt, or to dispute against points

established long since by the authority of councils, but to answer simply and directly to the question, whether you desire to maintain what you have written.”—“You command me, then, great emperor, and illustrious princes,” resumed Luther, “to give a direct reply, and I will obey you. This, then, is my decision: unless it is proved that I am wrong, by the witness of Holy Scripture, or by evident reasons, I can retract nothing of that which I have written or taught; for I will not wound my conscience. I declare, therefore, that I determine not my faith by the mere decisions of popes and councils, and that I acknowledge not their authority; and this because they have often erred, have contradicted each other, and are still liable to error and self-deception.”*

Charles, and the members of the diet, having listened to this bold address, retired to deliberate. Eckius, at last, delivered their decision in these words:—“Luther! you have answered the question put to you with less modesty than was fitting, and have improperly sought to turn it aside, by making a distinction between some of your books and others; for, supposing you retracted those in which your errors are chiefly contained, the emperor would not allow that to be censured in them which is pure and good. Numerous Germans, eminent for their virtue and knowledge, assisted at the council of Constance, the decrees of which you oppose; and, whilst you revive the errors they condemn, you desire to be convinced by the testimony of Holy Scripture. In this you are guilty of a most mischievous extravagance: for it is not lawful to dispute on points which the church has already condemned; nor is it becoming that every individual should be allowed to demand a reason on every point. Should it, in fact, ever be the case that all those who hold opinions contrary to the councils, or the decisions of the church, must be convinced by Scripture, nothing will remain fixed or certain. On this account, there-

* Steidan. Seckendorf, Acta Lutheri. Samliche Schriften, th. xv.

fore, the emperor commands, that you should declare openly what resolution you have taken respecting these your books."

Luther, on hearing this, turned towards the assembled princes, and, having entreated their succour, thus concluded: — "I have answered with all simplicity: nothing remains for me to say; for unless my adversaries instruct me, and convince me of error by solid and scriptural arguments, I cannot remain silent. All men have often and greatly erred; and it would be the height of impiety in me to wander from the Holy Scriptures, which can neither err nor deceive."

Thus ended the business of this memorable day. Luther had borne himself with a dignity which left the most favourable impression on the minds of many of his judges. The elector of Saxony declared that he felt delighted at the spirit with which he had spoken; and cherished the highest regard for his piety and resolution. Such, however, was the influence which the emissaries of Rome exercised on the emperor, that he addressed a letter to the diet the following day, containing a notification that he repented having so long delayed proceeding against Luther; that his ancestors had professed the Christian religion, and, for many ages, obeyed the church of Rome; that, as Luther had attacked them both, he regarded it as a sacred duty to undertake their defence; and, therefore, had resolved to employ his authority to the uttermost for the extinguishing of the fire which had been kindled by him and his followers.

It is said, that attempts were made to persuade Charles that he ought to prevent the escape of Luther, by immediate proceedings; but that he resisted these dishonourable insinuations by the caustic reply, that he had no wish to blush with his brother Sigismund. However this may be, he certainly assured the diet, that, as he had promised a safe-conduct to Luther, he felt responsible for his return to his own country. Unfortunately for the credit of German honour in the

sixteenth century, there were not wanting bigots who persisted in the assertion of a principle which would utterly desolate the civilised world, by legalising treachery in its basest form; but these traitors to honour and humanity were nobly opposed by Louis, elector palatine, who declared that, if such a course were pursued, Germany could never recover from the infamy which would thereby be inflicted on its name. It was even added, that the greatest caution should be employed in adopting the directions of the emperor, who had, evidently, been wrought upon by the prejudiced statements of the papal ministers; that terrible convulsions might result from a violent decision on the subject; and that the condemnation of Luther ought, therefore, to be deferred to a later period.

The advice thus given was in great measure dictated by the manifest excitement of the people in favour of Luther and his doctrines; but the clearness with which he had stated the reasons of his conduct were in such strong contrast with the haughty sophistry of the papal advocates, that it was scarcely possible for a high and right-minded man to resist his appeal. It was not till after two days' close deliberation that the members of the diet came to a decision on the emperor's note. They then determined that one of their number should be deputed to confer privately with Luther, and that efforts should be made to persuade him to submit to the judgment of the council, or at least retract the most offensive portion of his doctrines.

Notwithstanding the compromising air which this resolution bore, and the presence of a large body of powerful ecclesiastics, the archbishop of Treves was deputed to negotiate with Luther the terms of, what might fairly be described as, a treaty between him and the Roman court. On the 24th of April he obeyed the summons to attend the proposed conference. There were present, besides the archbishop, George of Saxony, the bishop of Augsburg, the elector of Brandenburg, and some other persons of rank. The business of the

meeting was commenced by Jerome Vehe, a jurisconsult of Baden. "It is not for the purpose of disputation," said he*, addressing Luther, "that we are assembled. The princes have obtained permission of the emperor to call you hither, in order that they may dispassionately consult with you on those important points which so greatly concern your interest and the peace of the church. And, first, with regard to councils: let it be allowed even that they have, at different times, arrived at different decisions, it does not necessarily follow that those decisions have involved contradictions. Or suppose, even, that they have sanctioned an error in some instances, this would not so utterly destroy their authority as to render it lawful for an individual to resist or despise their ordinances. Your books, if measures be not taken to repress them, will excite the greatest disorders. Many are the readers of your treatise on Christian liberty who have embraced the wildest errors; and so corrupt is the age, that, since there are several most excellent passages in your writings, there is every reason to fear that the devil urges you to attack religion and holiness, in order thereby to render every portion of your works feared and suspected. Those which you have last published plainly demonstrate that the tree must be judged, not by its flowers, but by its fruits. You are not ignorant of the warnings of Scripture against the will of the flesh, and the artifices of the spirit of evil. Think of your own salvation and that of others: tremble lest you endanger those whom Jesus Christ has redeemed, and, by your books and your preaching, involve them in the eternal condemnation which will fall on those who despise the dignity and authority of the church. What can be more excellent or useful than submission to the laws? No state can exist without them; nor can the church be preserved from troubles and disorders of every species, if the decrees of our fathers are allowed to be trampled under foot and treated as of no authority. For this

* Steidan, t. i. liv. iii. p. 90

it is, that the eminent and virtuous persons here present have desired to confer with you on the subject of your proceedings. They are anxious both for the tranquillity of the empire and your safety. If you obstinately persist in your opinions, and in pursuing measures so injurious to the peace of the state, the emperor, whose intentions are clearly understood, will banish you his dominions, and not leave a corner of Germany open for your retreat. Reflect seriously, then, on the course you take, and on the consequences of your decision."

Luther replied to this address with many expressions of gratitude for the interest which the princes had manifested in his favour. With respect to councils, he said, he did not condemn them all; but that of Constance merited the severest censure, for having denied the doctrines of Huss respecting the church and the Holy Spirit. "For my own part," he added, "I would suffer any thing, even to the sacrifice of life, rather than violate that plain precept of the Divine word, 'It is better to obey God than man.'*" As to the scandals," he continued, "of which I am said to be the cause, I neither can nor ought to hinder them. There are two kinds of scandals,—the one have relation to conduct, the other to faith: the former consisting in a bad life and licentious manners, and, therefore, to be wholly avoided; the other arising from the preaching of the word of God, and, therefore, not to be regarded; for though the whole world should be scandalised thereby, the will or commandments of the Eternal Father must neither be concealed nor perverted. Even Jesus Christ himself is described in the Gospel as a rock of offence; and in this the preachers of his word partake. It is, I know, our duty to obey magistrates and the laws. I have always taught that it is so; and this my writings will abundantly testify. But the decrees of the church demand a different consideration; for if the word of God be truly and rightly taught, and if the

* Acts, v. 29.

heads of the church fulfil their duty, after the example of Christ and his apostles, there can be no necessity for imposing on the minds and consciences of men the intolerable yoke of human laws. I am not ignorant that Scripture warns us against obstinacy and wilfulness: I confess the holiness of the precept, and will conform myself thereto, let them but permit me to persevere in the belief and profession of the Gospel."

Having thus spoken, he was requested to withdraw. The princes then deliberated on the measures which his inflexible determination might render it necessary to pursue. They had gained little advantage in the conference: Luther had yielded no point to their persuasions; and his perpetual recurrence to the simple statement that he would give up every thing, if they would convince him by Scripture, must have been as distressing and galling to their ears as it was in him becoming and reasonable. After some time Luther was recalled, and Vehe again earnestly exhorted him to submit his writings to the judgment of the emperor and princes of the diet. "And wherefore not?" exclaimed the reformer. "So far am I from wishing to avoid the judgment of the emperor, or the orders of the empire, that I shun no man's judgment, provided he uses Scripture as his guide. Unless this is done, I cannot retract my opinions; for St. Paul commands us not to believe even an angel from heaven, if he should teach any other doctrine than that which has been delivered.* Let me entreat you, therefore, to employ your interest with the emperor, that I may be permitted to preserve the purity of my conscience. If this be granted, I am willing to do whatever may be commanded me."—"Are you then resolved not to yield," said the elector of Brandenburg, "unless convinced by Scripture?"—"Assuredly so," was the prompt reply, "unless by Scripture or most evident reasons."

No further effort was made by the assembly to shake

* Gal. i. 8. Sleidan. Seeckendorf. Act. Lutheri, Epist. lib. i.

the resolution of this stern champion for Scripture against the assumptions of ecclesiastical tyranny. A hope, however, still lingered in the mind of the archbishop that Luther was open to persuasion. Eckius, consequently, was allowed to address him ; but his arguments only served to quicken the acuteness and strengthen the convictions of his hearer. A similar result followed the proceedings of the next day, when the archbishop again assembled some of his friends. At their earnest entreaties, Luther was induced to declare that he should willingly submit his books to the judgment of a future council ; but he added a clause which, in the minds of these advocates of the papacy, deprived his admission of all its value, for he concluded with saying, " provided their judgment is according to Scripture."

So little success having attended these conferences, the archbishop next addressed him in private. Less prejudiced or violent than the generality of his order, he spoke with a degree of candour and gentleness well calculated to influence Luther's determinations. " How," said he, " can the dangers and evils to which we stand exposed be countervailed ?"—" By the method," replied Luther, " which Gamaliel advised the Scribes and Pharisees to adopt in former times." The archbishop here ceased from pursuing the subject, but mildly assured Luther, that he would employ his authority in securing the fulfilment of the pledge he had received respecting his personal safety and uninterrupted return to his own country. Eckius soon after entered, and officially announced that his imperial majesty would preserve inviolate the safe-conduct which had been granted Luther, and allowed him twenty-one days to make the journey to his own city. He ordered, however, that he should quit Worms without delay, and prohibited his either preaching or distributing his writings on his way to Wittenberg.

Thus ended an affair which seemed, at the beginning, fraught with the worst dangers for Luther and his cause. Beset by enemies who had resolved to ruin him, and

by friends who, in their fear for his safety, half forgot the sacredness of the vows which were upon him, it required not less discretion than firmness to save his integrity, and ward off the blows intended for his destruction. Had he yielded the principle, that neither popes nor princes, neither churches nor councils, can have any authority to demand respect for doctrines not found in Scripture, Christendom might still have had to endure for ages the yoke of Roman superstition ; or had he, on the other hand, pressed his opinions with the air of a zealot, the princes of the diet would have felt no sympathy for his character, and the whole weight of the emperor's anger would have fallen unresisted upon his head.* Happily for him and the church, he was preserved on this occasion from abandoning the calm and moderate tone which so well becomes a preacher of righteousness, conscious of his integrity, and wholly bent on converting men's souls to the obedience of truth. This gave dignity to his words, and, while it awed the petulant spirits of one portion of his audience into unwilling silence, convinced the rest of his sincerity, his fortitude, his elevation of thought, and thorough purity of intention.

"The Lord's will be done!" "The Lord's name be praised!" were Luther's expressions of resignation and gratitude as he retired from the presence of the archbishop. On the 26th of April, the herald who had conducted him into the city of Worms prepared to attend him on his way towards home. The early part of the journey produced no event of importance ; but

* Cochleaus : *Acta et Scripta Lutheri*, p. 53. This writer speaks with great admiration of the constancy of the emperor, who, he says, was praised by all good and pious men for his zeal and fidelity to the church ; but he adds that the Lutherans were not less resolute in their slanders than were the faithful in their eulogies ; for they attributed the conduct of Charles, whom they described as merely a boy, to the instigation and flatteries of the papists and their bishops. The anger of Cochleaus, however, is chiefly directed against the two poets, Urieus Huthenius and Hermannus Buschius, who are said to have gone through the streets during the night, and written on the doors of the houses, "Woe to the Lout that hath a boy for its king!" Their efforts seem, indeed, to have aided in no slight degree to the popular excitement. Huthenius gave up the pension allowed him by the emperor. — *Epist. Lutheri*, p. 225.

on his arrival at Friedberg he addressed a letter to the emperor, and another to the several princes of the empire. In these epistles he brought distinctly before their attention the several circumstances which had lately occurred, and repeated his reasons for not retracting the doctrines contained in his various publications. Having confided his letters to the herald who had accompanied him thus far as a protector, he dismissed that officer, and entered alone the friendly states of the prince of Hesse.*

Luther's appearance in the little city of Hirschfeld produced the most lively sensation; and the abbot, who, besides his ecclesiastical dignity, enjoyed that of prince of the empire, pressed him so urgently to preach, that he was induced to comply with his request, notwithstanding the prohibition of the emperor.

Pursuing his almost solitary way, the reformer had entered the gloomy forests of Thuringia. Tried as he had been in heart and spirit by the machinations of his enemies, he was disposed to reflect with peculiar earnestness on the situation in which he stood. Europe, from one end to the other, resounded with his name: millions still regarded him as an enemy of truth and holiness; and, however thoroughly the conscience may be persuaded of its integrity, there is a something fearfully awful in the deep and often repeated ban of large multitudes of our fellow-men. To resist the feeling thus inspired, and from which even Luther's mind, gigantic as it was, could not have been wholly free, there were the noblest views, and the grandest sentiments, of an evangelical faith. But Luther could not enjoy these with the simple, pure delight of a Christian who has only his own soul, the work of his own salvation, to think of and care for. He was responsible for having divided the church; and he had undertaken to justify his conduct, by so expounding the doctrines of Christ that the truth should appear in its most original and divinest forms: an undertaking calculated to secure

* SeeLendorf, sec. 38. (230). Epist. pp. 225, 224 lib. i

the sympathy of every elevated mind ; but so weighty, that human thought takes the hue of melancholy even from its grandeur.

Luther had penetrated but a short way into the forest, when he encountered a party of armed horsemen, whose sudden appearance and mysterious behaviour would have justified a stranger in concluding that they were a detachment of banditti. Without stopping to parley, they seized the reformer, and, binding him upon a horse, conveyed him in perfect silence through the wood. After travelling some hours in this manner, they arrived about midnight at the castle of Wartberg, near Isenach.* There they unbound their prisoner ; and, having led him into the building, forthwith changed his simple ecclesiastical dress for that of a country gentleman of rank. Every attention was paid to his convenience ; and the respect shown him inspired the people about the castle with equal curiosity and surprise.

Thus separated from the world, secure alike of leisure and safety, Luther had ample opportunity to indulge in study and meditation. But his mind could not suddenly recover itself from the state of strong excitement under which it had hitherto been accustomed to carry on the processes of thought. There is a certain species of discipline by which men of genius overcome the disturbing influences of the world, and learn to practise self-control in the midst of every species of danger and distraction. But the superiority thus gained is a superiority and independence fitting them for labour in the world : to give them self-command, the power of abstraction and close application, when the mind is left, as it were, alone with the memory, and to the seduction of its own self-generated associations, another trial is necessary, and one to which the greatest men have not always proved equal.

Luther employed his solitude in the constant study of

* *Sämtliche Schriften*, tom. xv. cap. 7. — *Von dem Reichstag zu Worms*. See also orig. p. 240. — *Epist. Luth.* lib. i. pp. 226, 227, 229. — *Pallavic.* lib. i. cap. 23. D. 5

Scripture, and in the composition of new treatises on the points which were at present most anxiously debated by his followers and the Romanists. The chief of these works were, "A Discourse on Confession," dedicated to his distinguished friend and supporter, Franz Von Sickingen; "An Epistle to the Archbishop of Mayence," in which he speaks in the most open and boldest terms of the wickedness, the hypocrisy, and ignorance which that prelate had displayed; "A Treatise on Spiritual and Monastic Vows," dedicated to his father; and also some commentaries on the Psalms and the portions of Scripture appointed for the Sunday lessons. To these fruits of his retirement may be added, the preparations which he made for translating the Bible into the language of his country; a design which wisdom and piety might urge him to pursue as the most important of the steps yet taken for the purifying of the church.

Notwithstanding, however, this application to study, Luther found solitude as irksome to his mind, as it seemed unfavourable to the prosperity of his party. He took a pleasure in calling the castle of Wartberg his Patmos; but his expressions of weariness scarcely agree with the feeling with which, it seems from this, he was anxious to inspire his imagination. "I sit here," says he, "all the day idle and crapulous."* "I am here in a marvellous manner, willing and unwilling, a captive: willing to be so because it is God's will; and unwilling, because I would far rather contend openly for the word." In one of his letters, written about the same time to Philip Melancthon, he expresses his fears, lest by allowing himself to be detained in retirement he should seem to have deserted his ranks. "But I did not see," he adds, "how to resist those who wished and compelled this retirement. For my own part, I desire nothing more earnestly than to meet the fury of my enemies with outstretched neck. All the day long do I sit here and bring before me the image of the church, meditating on that passage*, 'Why

* Ps. lxxxi. 47.

hast thou made in vain all the sons of men? '* and contemplating the terrible image of God's wrath, and the abominable reign of the Roman antichrist. I detest the hardness of my heart, for not melting altogether into tears; for not pouring forth fountains of tears for the slaughtered children of my people. . . . Do thou, being a minister of the word, urge forward and defend the walls of Jerusalem, till their hands are also upon thee. Thou knowest thy calling and thy gifts. I pray for thee, if my prayers, as I doubt not they may, avail any thing. Do thou render mutual kindness, and let us bear the burden by turns. As yet, we stand alone in the battle: they will seek thee next."

The place of Luther's retreat was for some time unknown; and his followers were not without suspicion that the safe-conduct had been violated by the united treachery of the papal and imperial ministers. Considerable mystery hangs over this whole affair.† Luther's own expressions lead to the idea that he was prepared for being carried off, but that he was ignorant as to the time and place when the design was to be put into execution. It is said that even the elector of Saxony himself was unacquainted with the precise spot in which the reformer was to be kept concealed; and that he desired to remain in ignorance of it, that, when the emperor made inquiries on the subject, he might be able, with truth and honour, to declare his inability to afford information. Seckendorf, on the other hand, conjectures that this was so far from being the case, that Charles himself had favoured the plan of conveying Luther into a place of concealment, in order

* The health of Luther was at this time very seriously affected, as appears from the following passage in his letter to Melancthon: — "*Domini percussit me in posteriora gravi dolore: tam dura sunt excrementa, ut multa vi usque ad sudorem extrudere cogar: . . . unde nec tota nocte dormivi; nec adhuc pacem habeo. Ora quæso pro me. Nam intolerabile fiet hoc malum, si promoveat ut caput.*"

† Seckendorf has taken some pains to point out the errors into which the Roman catholic writers have fallen in describing Luther's asylum. He assigns, as a reason for the great desire which Charles manifested to secure the favour of the pope, his fear of the king of France; and adds, that no doubt can be entertained that he did on many future occasions, favour the cause of the Lutherans.

thereby to save him from the power of the pope, without any apparent compromise of his own imperial dignity and zealous adherence to the church.

However this may be, the timely publication of Luther's productions dissipated the fears which had arisen at his sudden disappearance. New strength and resolution seemed to be every day imparted to his friends and followers. At Wittenberg the monks of the Augustine order began seriously to consider the expediency of altering the discipline of their monastery, and abrogating some of their principal laws, and even the rule of public worship. Gabriel Didymus, one of the most influential of the brotherhood, declared in his sermons that the adoration of the sacrament, except at the administration of the communion, was idolatry; and that private masses, and the denial of the cup to the laity, were violations of the sacred ordinances, as instituted by Christ, and practised by the primitive church. These opinions were violently resisted by the prior and many of the monks; but the reformers persevered in their course, and, notwithstanding the wishes of their superior, ceased from performing private masses. Attempts being made to reduce them to obedience, thirteen of the number left the monastery; and such was the agitation created by this event, that the students and inhabitants of the town took up the question, which promised to afford new opportunities for improvement.

The elector now saw it fit to interfere; but, with that discretion which generally characterised his proceedings, he left the determination of the disputed points to certain deputies from the university and the chapter, on whose learning and piety dependence might fairly be placed by both parties. These deputies were Carlostad, Jerome Schurfus, Justus Jonas, John Doltsch, Melancthon, and Nicholas Amsdorfus. Their instructions were, to enter into communication with the separatists, and inquire the reasons for which they had seen fit to depart from the usual practice of the church. The monks returned their answer in writing. It pur-

ported, that as they no longer believed in the efficacy of private masses for the taking away of sin, they could not celebrate them without error; that Jesus Christ had instituted the eucharist with his apostles, who, in their turn, had never celebrated the sacrament except by way of communion; and, lastly, that as our Lord had, at the beginning, given both the bread and wine to his disciples, they also were bound, in the most solemn manner, to administer both whenever they celebrated mass.

With this answer of the monks the judgment of the deputies was in perfect accordance; except only that it spoke still more strongly on the subject of private masses, and the administration of the communion in both kinds. 'To none of the corruptions of the dark ages,' they said, 'was greater reprobation due than to the alterations which had been introduced in the service of the last supper: the mass was, in fact, nothing more than the communion of the body and blood of Christ; and it was as absurd, they added, to celebrate the mass for the salvation of those who were not present, as it would be to baptize one person for another.' In attributing to the notion, that the mass was a sacrifice, the origin of the most superstitious practices of the church, they manifested equal knowledge and acuteness; but they opposed themselves thereby to the Roman clergy in a manner calculated to rouse new fears on the part of the hierarchy. It was on the sense given to the institution of the eucharist that the peculant corrupters of Christianity had chiefly founded their systems of extortion; and it was instinctively discovered, by those who shared the fruits of these systems, that every attempt to bring back the administration of the ordinance to its early simplicity endangered their revenues and consideration with the superstitious multitude.

The same moderation and caution, however, which had hitherto characterised the movements of Luther and his followers, appear strongly marked in the reply

of the deputies. Instead of advising the immediate abolition of masses without communicants, they expressed it as their opinion that they might still be suffered, lest the weak should be offended; and one of the number, John Doltsch, advised that each communicant should be allowed to partake of the sacrament in one or both kinds, according to his conscience. In concluding their address, the deputies exhorted the elector to promote, as he best might, the spread of the Gospel through his dominions, so singularly favoured by its revival; and to beware lest, after having been exalted to heaven, they might, through his opposition to the truth, or any negligent treatment thereof, be brought down to hell.

Frederic perused this document with his accustomed seriousness of thought. It afforded him a fresh occasion for expressing the deep interest which he took in the propagation of evangelical principles. His determination was daily strengthened; and the course of events presented in quick succession befitting trials of its consistency; but he was still far from possessing clear or definite views of the subject in debate. In his answer to the deputies, which was conveyed by Christian Beyer, a burgomaster and professor, he assured them of his resolution to do whatever seemed good for the glory of God, and the cause of truth; but that it behoved him to proceed with caution in a matter which concerned the church at large; that at present their numbers were too small to attempt great changes; that it would be expedient to pause till the people were better instructed, before they put in practice their intentions, which it would require the co-operation of a considerable portion of the church to establish on a good and solid foundation. He concluded by requesting information as to the period when the alleged changes were made in the celebration of the eucharist; and suggested a consideration which, it cannot be denied, is to be praised rather for its policy than its evangelical simplicity. Many churches and monasteries, he said, had been founded to

secure the regular celebration of masses ; but if they were no longer performed, the founders of these institutions, or their descendants, would demand the restoration of the funds in the hands of the clergy, and thereby lead to discussions which might prove highly prejudicial to the tranquillity of the state.

It is gratifying to contemplate the noble firmness with which the founders of the Reformation persevered, under all circumstances, in the performance of their duty. The mild remonstrances of Frederic were as steadily contemplated, and as resolutely opposed, as the fierce threatenings which awoke the spirit of manly indignation. By calmly confirming their previous decision, the deputies afforded the prince a fair means of judging what degree of weight would, in future, be attached to his fears or reasonings as a politician. The questions he had asked were answered as might have been expected, when put to men well instructed in the history of the church. Monasteries and collegiate churches, they informed him, were founded as institutions for the instruction of youth in the principles of sound learning and theology, and had continued to be viewed in that light up to the time of St. Bernard : they added, that institutions for the performance of masses were not of more than 500 years' standing ; and that with regard to the funds out of which they were supported, it ought not to be considered a violation of the will of the founders, if that which had been left, out of a mistaken piety, for superstitious purposes, were now to be employed in the legitimate support of truth and holiness ; and, lastly, that the practice of administering the communion in both kinds had not ceased till the commencement of the twelfth century, and not even then, except in the Roman church.

The elector appears to have been little prepared for this reply of the deputies : it obliged him to take measures which he would gladly have delayed. Neither were the monks nor the canons settled in their opinions ; and there was reason to fear that the abolishing of

masses, at the present moment, might lead to dangerous confusion. He resolved, therefore, to use his influence and authority to prevent any immediate change, and directed his agent to make his sentiments known ; intimating, however, that he desired to see a way opened for reform by every means which could be safely and profitably employed.

But a mighty change had taken place in the state of things since either princes or pontiffs could determine what should be kept standing, or what should fall, in the institutions of religion. The people rejoiced with eager spirits at the prospect of increasing light ; they already tasted the first fruits of their emancipation from the thralldom of ignorance and superstition ; and every proceeding which related to their own rights as Christians, or to the services of the altar, was watched with jealous attention and anxiety.

An important crisis was at hand. The church still retained the form it had assumed under the plastic power of Roman domination. Doctrines had been tried by the test of Scripture, and the belief demanded of mankind reduced, or rather exalted, to the plain rule of God's own word ; but that cumbrous ceremonial which had been invented to display, under visible forms, the dreamings of a fraudulent enthusiasm, presented a barrier which it required a fresh exercise of devout courage to assail. The minds and understandings of men are sooner undeceived than their hearts or their affections ; and their faith, as to the particular articles of a creed, may consequently be purified with greater ease than their taste for the external rites and ceremonies of an old established worship.

The deputies could not be persuaded to give up their opinions respecting those silent and solitary masses which, described as efficacious for the delivery of souls from purgatory, and the protection of Christians in every kind of danger, had hitherto produced such enormous profits under the management of the Roman hierarchy. Insisting, however, only on that which seemed de-

manded by the positive necessities of the case, they declared their readiness to leave less important points to the conclusion of every man's conscience. Frederic, in opposing the latitude thus demanded, and at the same time encouraging the public preaching of the principles on which it was founded, hastened the collision which it was his main object to prevent.

Carlostad, though possessing neither the vigour nor the elevated genius of Luther, was inspired by a zeal as resolute and ardent as that of his great master. This fervour of disposition, unmodified by the force which Luther derived from his wonderful strength of understanding, urged him to take a step which could only have been rendered safe by the concurrent determination of the whole body of reformers. It was part of his duty to perform service in the church of the castle on Christmas-day, and he seized the occasion for making numerous and important alterations in the office of the eucharist. He not only read the service in German, but left out the regular ordinance of the confessional, most of the old usages and ceremonies, and freely administered the wine, as well as the bread, to all present.

The greatest excitement followed this dangerous but conscientious proceeding. Frederic and his court foresaw that the pope would employ it as a motive for new attempts upon the freedom of his subjects; he again, therefore, had recourse to negotiation; and the senate and university seemed disposed to employ their mutual authority for appeasing the rising storm. But so far was the caution of the prince from acting as any check to the views of the reformers, that every day produced some fresh instance of their increasing strength. It now began to be openly affirmed, that the celibacy of the clergy was not commanded by any law of God; and, to prove that the opinion had more than a theoretical influence on their minds, Bartholomew Bernhardt, parish priest of Kemberg in Saxony, entered into the marriage state. He was summoned to answer for his conduct before the archbishop of Magdeburg, but refused to

attend. Melanethon supported his cause by a powerful apology ; and the example thus set was speedily followed by others of the clergy.

Luther had little to do with these transactions ; he was still immured in his solitude, and it was only at intervals that information reached him of the progress of events. He ought not, perhaps, to have regretted the constraint upon his actions at this juncture of affairs. Experiments were tried with comparative safety by others, which might have precipitated him at once into inextricable difficulties ; but he heard of the occurrences at Wittemberg with impatient interest. While he rejoiced at the increase of resolution and freedom, so manifest in those events, he trembled lest some act of imprudence, or injudicious conduct of the dispute with Rome, might lessen the dignity they enjoyed as true and sanctified upholders of the Gospel. Respecting the abolishing of private masses *, he addressed, from his retirement, a tract on the subject to the Augustine monks, in which he repeats the arguments before advanced in his book, "*De Captivitate Babylonica*." To these he adds, that he rejoiced at the tidings which were brought him from his brethren ; but that he feared they might not all continue of one mind, or persevere with courage and diligence in the work they had begun. In regard to the marriage of the clergy he spoke doubtfully. The arguments advanced by Carlstadt had not the weight or clearness which he wished to see on a subject of such importance. That reformer, as well as his associates, Melanethon and Amsdorf, contended against the celibacy not only of priests and bishops, but even of the monastic orders. Luther was with difficulty persuaded that the monks were in the same state as the clergy. "You have not yet led me to believe," says he, "that the monastic vow is like the vow of the

* He says, in his letter to Melanethon, dated St. Peter's day, 1521, "Never more, for all eternity, will I administer a private mass. Let us, I beseech you, pray the Lord to give us straightway a more ample portion of his Spirit. The Lord, I fear, will quickly visit Germany, to punish its incredulity, impiety, and hatred of the Gospel." — *Epost.* p. 178

priesthood. The priestly order was instituted by God, and is free: not so that of the monks, who chose to be so, and voluntarily devoted themselves to heaven. . . . But St. Paul says of priests, that their marriage is prohibited by devils; and if his voice is that of the Divine Majesty, I fear not to believe his sentence; so that if a priest, at his ordination, did acknowledge this prohibition of the devil, he may, now that he knows with whom the compact was made, freely regard it as dissolved. The declaration that this prohibition is, indeed, of the devil, greatly affects my mind, and compels me to applaud what has been done by the bishop of Cameramus: for God neither deceives nor lies when he calls it a prohibition of Satan; and if the compact be confirmed, it ought not to be firm. . . . Add to this, that celibacy is merely of human institution, which any man, and, therefore, every Christian, may annul, — which I should say, were it not the invention of devils, but the work of a good man. As I have no such divine authority whereon to speak concerning monks, it is not safe to assert the same respecting them; nor should I dare to follow it, or to advise others to follow it. Would that there might never be another monk, or at least a monk admitted to the vows under thirty years of age. Scandal must be avoided in all things where we have not Scripture plainly on our side, even though they be lawful.” *

In his next letter to Melancthon he speaks with praise of the zeal and diligence of Carlostad, but plainly convicts him of having employed Scripture without due attention to its strict and logical application. “I say these things,” he observes, “because I am anxious that nothing should proceed from you which depends for its force on obscure or ambiguous texts. Light is re-

* Epist. Lutheri, tom. i. pp. 238, 239. These epistles are highly interesting, as showing the noble ingenuousness of Luther, and his state of feeling at this period. The concluding sentences of the former are a curious specimen of his strong mode of stating the doctrine of justification: — “*Si gratia predicatorum; gratiam non fictam sed veram predica: si vera gratia est, verum non fictum peccatum ferto. Deus non facit salvos fecte peccatores.*”

quired from us stronger than the light of suns and stars, yet they see not." In another, addressed to Spalatinus, he says, "I have received from my host the 'Dialogues,' and two 'Quaternions' of Carlostad. Good God! and will our Wittenbergenses give wives even to monks? They shall not, however, obtrude one upon me. The author of the 'Dialogues' had not sufficient ingenuity — sufficient erudition; and would that Carlostad would write with greater clearness, for his writings exhibit great power both of wit and scholarship."* He repeats the same sentiment in his next letter to Spalatinus, but in stronger terms. "How much I wish that Carlostad would endeavour to argue against celibacy with a fitter application of Scripture. I am afraid he will make both himself and us a laughing stock. . . . His cause is good, and his design excellent; but I desire to see the execution equally so. You know how much light and energy are required of us by our adversaries, since even the best and clearest things are calumniated; whence it results that we must take the greater care, and, standing as we do upon the theatre of the world, mind that our words, as St. Paul says, be without offence."†

It was thus the great apostle of the Reformation continued, from day to day, earnestly striving in the holy work he had begun. Distinguished above his brethren for perspicuity of thought, he studied, unceasingly, the main doctrines of Christ's religion, as they lay expanded before him in the supreme brightness of Divine revelation. His soul, thus nurtured, had an experimental conviction of the force and divinity of truth. It was the bread of life to him: he grew in the strength which it had given him from the days of his youth. It was not to the logic he derived from the schoolmen, to the knowledge he had gathered from philosophers and historians, or to the experience which long

* Epist. p. 210.

† Epist. tom. i. p. 241. A little after this he writes: — "De Carlstadio dilecto: cui etsi facile resisti potest; tamen adversariis nostris gloriandi dabitur occasio, de intestina nostra discordia, magno scandalo infirmorum." — *Epist. ad N. Amsdorfum*, tom. i. p. 358.

intercourse with mankind had now given him, that he could attribute the power he possessed, or the hopes which elevated him so far above the world, but simply to his knowledge of the Bible, the faithful study of which had first made him wiser than his teachers, and then the most enlightened of teachers that the world had seen since the early days of simplicity and holiness.

CHAP. V.

RISE OF FANATICISM. — MUNCER AND HIS FOLLOWERS. — MELANCTHON'S DOUBTS. — WRITES TO LUTHER. — FIRMNESS OF THAT REFORMER. — RETURNS TO WITTEMBERG. — CARLOSTAD'S PROCEEDINGS. — DIET OF NUREMBERG. — PROGRESS OF REFORM. — CONTROVERSY WITH HENRY VIII. AND ERASMUS.

THE commencement of the Reformation was happily unmarked by any of those popular convulsions which have disfigured the beginning of other important changes. Luther entered upon his course without being conscious of either the extent or the "grandeur" of the designs which he was destined to effect. The light broke gradually upon him, and he was contented to walk by the light which he received. In a similar manner, the people found themselves roused to reflection by the bold corruptions of their constituted teachers, and, becoming willing listeners to the voice of reason and truth, made the first step towards shaking off the yoke. But they could see but a short way before them. Beyond the point they had reached, all was strange and obscure. The sanction of ages, rendered venerable by the memory of their forefathers, protected the rites and doctrines of the church from any sudden attack. No hand was bold enough to lift the veil which hung, dark and mysteriously, before the pretended holy of holies. And this caution and tenderness, though sparing that which, of itself, merited it not, had their reward. Enthusiasm is often nothing but a concealed selfishness; and no encouragement being offered to pride or cupidity, ambition or licentiousness, at this period, the people were allowed both time to think, and freedom to follow the conclusions of their own reason.

To the sorrow of those spiritual and conscientious-minded men, whose sole desire it was to see Christian doctrine restored to its original purity, their steady proceedings were unexpectedly opposed by the sudden

rising of a party whose zeal had all the dangerous characteristics of the most fiery fanaticism. The authors of this schism were Nicholas Storch, a draper, Thomas Munzer, Mark Stubner, Martin Cellarius, Mark Thomas, and a sufficient number of associates to make up the number of what they were pleased to term twelve apostles and seventy-two disciples. These persons were for the most part tradesmen; a class not usually excited at the first call of enthusiasm; but possessed, when such is the case, of both the qualities and the means to render it in the highest degree infectious. Storch commenced his career at Zwickau, a town in Misnia; and Munzer also, who was destined to make the most conspicuous figure in the affair, first displayed his powers of oratory in the church of St. Catherine, in that city. They were vigorously met by the established teachers of the place; but they had seized upon topics which readily command popular attention. The people were awake to religious appeals. They had been taught that the word of God contained revelations of truths which were now for the first time to be made known. What those truths were, they could as yet but imperfectly understand. Great changes were expected; new light was looked for on all sides; and when a band of men, full of hardy enthusiasm, stood up and warmly asserted that they were endowed with peculiar gifts of the Spirit, the multitude only followed the impulse of natural feeling in yielding to their call.

On the arrival of the new reformers at Wittenberg, Melancthon and Ansdorf found themselves in a situation of extreme difficulty. The preachers, notwithstanding their violence and furious zeal, might, after all, be only contending with greater earnestness of purpose for that which the better educated of their body laboured for more cautiously or timidly. Nor had the professors of the reformed school of theology clearly determined, as yet, what were the true signs of inspiration, or the proper marks of an apostolic spirit and authority. Instead, therefore, of attempting to oppose their progress

by an immediate appeal to learning and eloquence, Melancthon wrote to inform the elector of the agitation into which the city had been thrown by the preaching of Muncer and his associates. He had conversed with them, he said, and found that they ought by no means to be despised. His counsel was, that Luther, who alone, he remarked, could judge whether they were inspired or not, should be recalled.* The elector consented to this advice; but Luther himself, when informed by Melancthon of the late events, wisely answered, that the question respecting the inspiration of such men might be at once determined, for that God had never given extraordinary powers to his ministers without enabling them to prove their authority by miracles or other signs.

The confidence with which the new prophets believed themselves inspired forbade their yielding any degree of submission to Luther, as a guide or master. He is for the most part right, they said, but another will come after him of a higher spirit; and they foretold that, in six or seven years, events would take place whereby the state of the church and of the world would be altogether changed, and not a sinner left alive. In conformity with their notions on particular points of Christian doctrine, they at once began to change the accustomed rites and ordinances of the church. Baptism especially, it was contended, had for many ages been administered with serious perversions of its divine origin; and pædobaptism was sternly prohibited as a glaring offence against the holiness of the sacrament. Melancthon, on this point, confessed himself moved by their arguments; and even the temporary doubts of such a man as Me-

* "I have had a conference with them. They state wonderful things respecting themselves; namely, that they are sent to instruct mankind by the clear voice of God; that they verily hold converse with God, see future things, and, in short, are altogether prophetic and apostolic men. I cannot describe how my mind is affected by this affair. . . . The Gospel, and the honour and peace of the church, are all in danger; and it is, therefore, in every respect needful that these people and Martin, on whom they continually call, should be brought together. I would not have written to your grace had there not been urgent necessity for counsel." — *Melancthon's Letter to the Prince, Sämliche Schriften*, tom. xv. p. 288.

lancthon in their favour speak strongly for the seriousness, the ardour, and acuteness with which the leaders of the sect must at first have reasoned.

In no case, perhaps, did the sterling good sense, as well as the piety and exalted genius, of Luther appear more conspicuously than in the calm, judicious answers which he sent to his friends, thus excited by the bold pretensions of the anabaptists. If ever a strong and devout mind was exposed to the temptations of enthusiasm, Luther's now was. Solitude had given him full liberty to speculate on every species and form of truth; to muse on the possibilities of things; and in proportion as his thoughts found freedom, and rose above the sphere of ordinary anxieties, they were exposed to the strong current of those feelings which had been generated in his long and eventful struggle. There is, moreover, a natural tendency in the human mind to pursue inquiry when once successfully begun; and the old established barriers past, a wide and dim horizon presents itself, involving in its ample extent glorious shapes and visions, which seem to beckon to the inquirer, and summon him to more daring efforts. But Luther was gifted with a noble self-possession: he saw distinctly the path which it was his duty to pursue; for he was not only content to walk by the light of Scripture, but to accept with gratitude the light as it shone upon him, without attempting, by his own fervours, to give it a stronger lustre. In his answer to Melancthon he plainly states, that he considered the anabaptists to possess no claims to attention; that they bore witness to themselves, and were not to be credited; and that whatever had been related of them could easily be accounted for as illusions of the devil.

It might have been supposed that such decided counsel would have effectually warned the reformers of Wittenberg against continuing their connection with Muncer and his party. But so well had the latter established their claims to consideration in the mind of Melancthon and others, that, notwithstanding Luther's

remonstrance, the great supporters of his cause could not at once be drawn off from the danger to which they were exposed. Melancthon even afforded Stubner an asylum in his own house, and assisted in procuring him pupils. Thus left free to pursue their plans, and in some degree supported by the countenance of the most eminent men of the age, the new reformers became bolder every day, and had the satisfaction of seeing the people crowd to hear the account of their visions, and the statements, which they had always ready, of the splendid events which would shortly follow the establishment of their doctrines.

This state of things was sufficiently alarming to fill the mind of Luther with the most distressing apprehensions. He foresaw that, if enthusiasm should continue to increase, it would effectually destroy the success of his labours, and once more reduce his countrymen to the bondage of darkness and superstition. The untamed passion for liberty, which breaks down those wholesome restraints which ages of civilisation have found necessary to social security, is the worst enemy that liberty has to encounter : it smothers, in its mad embraces, the object it adores ; and then, in its frenzy and despair, yields itself willingly again to be the dupe and slave of tyranny. In religion, the mass of mankind are always ready to go a certain distance with the ardent and enthusiastic : there is a tendency to trust and confidence in the human mind whenever there is any awakening of its sympathies ; but this feeling can only be supported for a short time, and to a very limited extent. When the period of strong surprise is over it sinks back to its usual level, and resumes its suspiciousness, its scepticism, or its subjection to more ancient errors. It had been Luther's object to lead the people along the same path in the discovery of truth which he had himself traced. This was, from the beginning, the great characteristic difference between the founder of protestantism and the clergy of the church of Rome. The latter have always acted as if

mankind at large had not the same power of perceiving and loving that which is true and holy as the privileged orders of priests and monks ; or as if, in the acquisition of knowledge, and the work of salvation, the principles of human nature operate in a different manner to what they do when any other species of good is to be earnestly pursued. In the teaching of the reformers, on the contrary, we trace the most ardent wish to make every branch of their system perfectly intelligible ; to lay open the treasures out of which they drew their wealth ; and to enable every man to bring their system to the test of an authorised standard, and learn, and consider, and decide for himself, according to the word of God. But the anabaptists pretended to peculiar privileges ; to incommunicable light and knowledge ; and, consequently, to an absolute authority over the consciences of their followers. Even the intolerance and tyranny of Rome would have been more sufferable than the domination of such fanatics ; and Luther, therefore, wisely determined to oppose them, whatever might be the difficulties which, in his present circumstances, stood in the way of such a resolution. He had done much by his writings, while concealed in the solitude of his Patmos : they had kept up the spirits of his followers ; and proved to Rome the indomitable courage which inspired the hearts of its assailants. But the new reformers appealed to feelings, and to a class of reasoners scarcely within the reach of such missals ; and no man was ever more ready to discern the true effect of his proceedings than Luther. He saw plainly that, in such a juncture as the present, other measures must be pursued than those which might influence the scholars of Wittenberg, or those portions of his countrymen whose ears were only open to the truth. Convinced of this, he determined upon a step which his friends regarded as rash and precipitate ; but which was equally justified by the state of affairs, and his conscientious decisions as to the general line of duty marked out for him by God.

Leaving the castle he set out on the road to Wittemberg. He had spent ten months in the retreat provided for him by his cautious and affectionate prince. No change appeared in the counsels of Rome, or its adherents; and Frederic himself was known to be averse to his taking any step which might again expose him to their machinations. When he heard of his being actually on the way to the scene of his early labours, he expressed the greatest anxiety for his safety; nor can it be doubted but that he feared in some degree the political consequences which might result from his re-appearance in the world. These considerations so far prevailed with Luther, that his first journey from Eisenach was performed in cautious secrecy, and he returned almost immediately to the castle. The elector then sent the governor of Eisenach to urge upon him the necessity of his still remaining concealed; and especially to represent, that should his re-appearance at Wittemberg be known to the emperor, he could no longer preserve him from the effects of that sovereign's displeasure; but that if he awaited with patience the assembling of the diet at Nuremberg, his affairs should obtain a new and careful investigation.

Luther was never wanting in respect for his prince; but political suggestions had no weight with him, when the great object for which he lived seemed in danger. He hastened, therefore, to Wittemberg, with the resolution of meeting at once both his enemies and the false associates of his followers. From the neighbourhood of Leipzig he addressed a letter to Frederic.* In this epistle he spoke, in the strongest terms, of the anxiety which afflicted his mind, on account of the late events in the university. From none of the dangers and troubles, he said, with which he had been assailed during so many years of his life, had he suffered so keenly as from the present disorders. It was not for his own safety or honour, he added, but for that of the Gospel, he trembled; and as he found that he

* Seeckendorf, *see*. 119. (295.)

had in vain made submissions to the pride of his enemies, and sought by reasoning and persuasion to convince them of his rectitude, he would, for the future, pursue his course without regard either to their threats or their wiles. In respect to the duke George, he said, they had too long borne the cruel rage and insults which that prince heaped upon the Gospel; that he had prayed for him; but would only do so once more; and was convinced, that if he wished, he could with one word consign him to death. "I write thus, to your highness," he proceeds, "in order that you may know that my journey to Wittenberg is made under a protection infinitely more powerful than yours. I am willing that you should abandon me: the cause for which I struggle has no need of the sword of princes to support or further it. God will himself defend it, without the aid of man. You are weak in faith: I wish not to have you for my protection. But you ask my advice as to the course you ought to pursue. I will tell you. Remain quiet: you have already done too much. It is not the will of God that this cause should be defended by force. Believe this, and you will be safe: reject it, and you must needs be a prey to doubt and inquietude. For the rest, if I be taken, and put to death, you will be free from blame; for I have refused to obey you. Resist not the emperor: leave him free to act as he chooses in your dominions; let him deprive your subjects of their possessions -- of their lives. He cannot command so powerful a prince as you to take away my life with your own hands. But, should he even do this, let me only know it; and, whether you believe me, or believe me not, I know this, that for the love of me your life, your soul, your possessions shall be safe."

Two days after the date of this letter Luther entered Wittenberg. Frederic sent Dr. Schurfius to him; not however, for the purpose, as might have been expected, of reproaching the free expression of his feelings above cited, but to concert measures for lessening the dan-

gers which seemed to be approaching. The messenger of the prince, after mildly blaming his temerity in returning to Wittenberg without permission, desired him to address a letter to Frederic which might be made public, and serve as an apology for the step he had taken. Luther readily consented to this, and immediately wrote to the elector in terms which seemed calculated to produce the effect contemplated. In the first place, he said, his duty obliged him to continue the work of reformation ; in the next, the necessities of the flock over which he was placed demanded his presence ; and, thirdly, there were signs of approaching tumults and seditions, and he considered himself bound to do whatever was in his power to avert the calamities which might thence arise. The elector, however, required a somewhat clearer mode of expression in the apologetic parts of this letter ; and even corrected it with his own hand. Luther consented to adopt his corrections, and his epistle was published under its new form.*

While these transactions were taking place, the people of Wittenberg looked with eagerness for the re-appearance of Luther in the pulpit from which he had so often dispensed to them the words of truth and salvation. On the ninth of the month he resumed his labours by preaching the first of a series of sermons against the ill-judged changes and precipitancy of Carlostad. The measure which that reformer had pursued prepared the way for attempts being made by men who possessed neither his learning nor his piety ; and they were accordingly productive of consequences which could not be too seriously deplored. Luther bore testimony to the evangelical purity of Carlostad's opinions, by plainly stating that it was not his doctrines, but his regulations and ordinances, which he condemned. The grounds of his censure were such as would have been taken by most men of strong good sense and experience. He feared that the people were not, in general, sufficiently enlightened to see the reasons of abolishing the

* Seeckendorf, sec. 120. (297.)

rites of Romanism ; and he wished to have them led only as they could walk safely, and see the path they were treading. Thus, with the exception of the abolishing of private masses, he expressed himself as displeased with all the measures which had been taken. In his second sermon he contended strongly for the absolute freedom of mankind in matters of religion ; and in that which followed, allowed the toleration of images in churches, although his opinion was against them, and contended only for care being taken to prevent their adoration, adding, that even when they were adored, no force ought to be employed ; and that if the people regarded them as objects of veneration, they should be left till greater light and knowledge convinced the worshippers of their error : in his fourth sermon he still further developed his opinion on this subject, and with the same tolerant spirit. The next discourse was devoted to the consideration of some of the changes which had been introduced in the mode of administering the communion. Carlostad very properly condemned the superstitious practice of the Roman church in forbidding the communicants to touch the consecrated bread, which was put into their mouths by the priests. It appears, however, that much scandal had followed this change ; and Luther, regarding the subject as comparatively unimportant, would have preferred the continuance of the ancient custom to an alteration fraught with such danger. In the following discourse he insisted, with great earnestness, on the necessity of a careful preparation for approaching the Lord's table, and pointed out the many abuses which had taken place when persons were admitted indiscriminately to the communion. The series was concluded by a discourse on the necessity and profitableness of confession, and on the right of the people to partake of the sacrament in both kinds ; but in urging the latter point, he was careful to remark, that the proposed change ought to be effected by careful expositions of the nature of the sacrament rather than by any act of authority.

Of such importance did Luther consider the modification of Carlostad's proceedings, that he followed these discourses with a treatise on the communion in both kinds, and on the other changes introduced by his former associate. According to this pamphlet, he wished it to be understood that the people should be left at liberty, and allowed to receive, as their consciences dictated, the sacrament in one or both kinds; that the mass should be celebrated in German, but in other respects as formerly, those things only being abolished which gave it the appearance of a sacrifice; that some support should be made for the priests who wished to say private masses; that images should be still allowed; and, lastly, that ecclesiastics should be permitted to marry.*

It is not easy to discover the reasons of Luther for these strong appeals to the public on the subject of Carlostad's reforms. He appears to have approved of them in the main, as supported by the Gospel, and as even necessary to the purity of the church. His chief argument against them was their somewhat too early introduction; but it may be fairly questioned whether the method he employed to repress the supposed danger, was either lawful or judicious. If Carlostad acted conscientiously, he deserved respect and sympathy, not exposure and reproof; and if the arguments which Luther employed against him were valid to their full extent, they would render the introduction of reform, at any period, a matter of doubtful expediency, there being no season in which some danger must not be encountered, no state of society in which weak minds may not be offended at the changes introduced. It has been suspected that Luther was influenced by personal pride in these attacks upon his coadjutor; that he was offended at the show of independence which appeared in his proceedings, and that he feared his own fame, as a reformer, might be diminished by such anticipations in the purifying of the church. But this ought not to be

* Sleidan.

allowed except on the clearest evidence. Pride and selfishness can consort with neither truth nor holiness. Vanity eats up whatever there is of grandeur in a character the moment it enters it ; and Luther, deprived of that venerable air which the nobleness of truth and self-devotion bestows, assumes the form of a bold hypocrite, whose exertions were valuable to the world because God made him his instrument, but who deserves for himself neither the love nor gratitude of mankind.

Such, however, is the infirmity of our nature, that the brightest virtue has its specks ; and Luther may well be allowed the plea which seems to be required whenever human holiness is described either in sermons or in history. The haughty expressions which he employed savour too strongly of personal feeling to leave us free from the suspicion that his mind was agitated by passion ; but there is, at least, equal reason to believe that this passion was neither selfish nor hypocritical, and that the amount of blame due to him should be measured by what is due to intemperate anger, and not by our hatred to a calculating hypocrisy.

In the midst of these proceedings the time approached for the assembling of the diet at Nuremberg. There were circumstances which justified Luther in looking forward to this event with an anxiety not unmingled with hope. He had now many powerful allies. The elector himself had promised that his affairs should be again brought before the assembled states of the empire ; and he knew that with the increase of his popularity he had acquired new weight in the counsels of his judges. The papal authority, moreover, was now in other hands. Leo X., dying in the flower of his age, had left the church little edified, or profited, by the splendour of his reputation. Literature found in him a generous patron ; but the period was arriving when learning and philosophy were to rise triumphant above the toils of patronage, and to assert their independence among an inquisitive and thoughtful people. Adrian, the new

pope, was as opposed to Leo in matters of ecclesiastical policy, as he differed from him in personal character and disposition. Greatly advanced in age, stern in manners, and distinguished for his virtues, he proclaimed, at his elevation to the pontifical chair, the necessity of a speedy reform of the abuses of the church. This declaration was far from amounting to an acknowledgment that a review of its doctrines was necessary, or that the alleged corruptions were the result of a departure from the simplicity of evangelical truth; but it might be supposed that such a confession, on the part of the head of the church, would have some influence on the minds of men, in judging of the character of one who had stood forward to oppose those corruptions when producing the most grievous consequences.

The diet of Nuremberg was regarded with interest by most of the European potentates. Adrian wrote to Frederic on the subject early in October, and expressed himself as highly gratified at finding that he intended to be present at the meeting. He exhorted him, as a prince of the empire, and, therefore, one of the protectors of the apostolic see, to employ the best and justest means that could be devised for the conservation of the church, and the upholding of its rights. During the sitting of the assembly, he wrote to the members in general, declaring that since his elevation to the apostolic office he had not ceased to exert himself diligently in the fulfilment of its duties: that his heart was filled with the most earnest desire to perform the part of a good pastor, and to prevent, to the utmost of his power, the wandering of the sheep committed to his charge: that to accomplish his wishes, he had repeatedly exhorted kings and princes to cease from war, and if they could not be persuaded to cultivate peace, at least to content themselves with turning their weapons against the enemies of the faith: that he had himself given a large sum to the knights of Rhodes, to enable them to make head against the Turkish emperor; and that having by these methods endeavoured to provide against

evils from without, he had now begun to inquire what remedies might be found for those which were within : that he had learnt with much sorrow that Martin Luther, who had at first been treated with paternal tenderness, and who, that failing, had next been condemned and proscribed by the universities, by pope Leo, and also by the emperor, was not only unimproved, but was daily increasing in violence and hostility to the church : that this circumstance was the more afflicting as he found that many noble personages favoured the heresy ; and that the dignity and possessions of the clergy in Germany were greatly injured by its advance : that St. Paul indeed had said that heresies must needs be * ; but that, as things were now situated, heresy had never appeared at a more unfortunate season : that the devil was heaping up every species of calamity at the same moment, to confound the powers of Christendom : that by his instigation alone, the Turks were raging with unexampled fury, and the Germans, a people so celebrated for their courage, were infected by the heresy of Luther : that every one knew how mighty was the power of the Turks ; but that even were it brought under, the greater evil would remain, should the enemy continue unrepressed who ruled within : that when he lived in Spain †, he had heard much of the false dogmas of Luther, and that, though it was an affliction to him to know that this evil had had its origin in his own native country, there were two considerations which had greatly comforted him, — the one, that it might be hoped that all the world would despise a system so impious and so ill-grounded, — the other, that it seemed little probable that this pernicious plant, carried elsewhere, would ever take root in a country which had ever been famous for producing the antagonists of heretics : that the event having turned out contrary to his hopes,

* 1 Cor. xi. 19.

† Adrian was a native of Utrecht, and having acquired great reputation in the university of Louvain, was appointed by the emperor Maximilian tutor to Charles of Austria. He was subsequently sent ambassador into Spain, and attained the bishopric of Tortosa. Charles made him one of his counsellors. — *Steidan*, tom. i. 121.

whether by the just judgment of God, or through the negligence of those whose duty it was to apply an early remedy to the evil, there was now reason to fear, that by acting with too much caution and delay, they had incurred the suspicion of having forfeited the virtues of their ancestors: that it was a circumstance much to be deplored, that a people so celebrated for their bravery and constancy should abandon a religion which Jesus Christ and the apostles had preached to them, and which so many martyrs and illustrious saints, and their own ancestors, had professed, and that also at the instigation of an obscure monk, who had himself followed it for many years; as if the church had been in error during such a long course of ages; as if Jesus Christ, who had promised to be always with it, would have allowed it to fall into the most grievous darkness; and as if Luther was the only one who had sense, or whom God had been pleased to choose to make manifest the error of the whole world: that he was convinced his opinions would appear unworthy of attention to all thoughtful minds; but that, notwithstanding, they were popular, calculated to flatter vanity, and well fitted to the purposes of those who only desired to increase their own power and liberty. "For," added he, "is it not evident to what all this tends, and in what it will end? Is it not that, under the veil of Christian liberty, they may destroy all law, and every species of right and justice? How can it be expected that they, who treat with so much ignominy the laws of popes and councils, and who will even cast them into the flames, will respect and obey the civil magistrate? Who will believe that they who fear not to commit sacrilege, and to pillage, with impure and bloody hands, things consecrated to God, will abstain from invading possessions less holy? They who can dare to assail the priests of God, and even to massacre them, will, doubtlessly, soon cease to venerate any class among men; and the licence in which they indulge will be extended against princes, their children, their consorts, their possessions, and their dominions." At

the conclusion of this address, he exhorts them to forget their private enmities, and unite with one mind to extinguish the domestic fire which had been lit by Luther: to resolve on either bringing him to submission, or, if he still resisted, to punish him according to the laws, and the late decree of the emperor and the empire. This was necessary, he said, not only to remove the stain which had been infixed on the character of Germany, but to secure the safety of those who had been infected by the contagion of his heresy: for himself, he added, he was far more inclined to mildness than severity,—both his disposition, his principles, and his kind of life led to this,—but that as the evil could not be cured by gentle means, it became them to employ others of an opposite character. Many passages of Scripture, he said, authorised this conclusion; and their ancestors had set them a proper example, at the council of Constance, by their treatment of John Huss and Jerome of Prague: if they would follow this example of faithfulness and zeal, God would not fail, he assured them, to prosper their undertakings, and to deliver them from the vengeance of the Turks. He was willing, he concluded, not only to resign all his possessions, but to sacrifice his life for the sake of his flock; and had sent Francis Cheregat as his nuncio, with full instructions respecting the steps which he desired should be taken in respect to Luther.

It is evident from this letter, that, whatever might be the personal character of the sovereign pontiff, he had little inclination to favour, by any direct influence, the cause of reformation. But it was fortunate for Luther that he had now to contend with a man who seemed resolved on bringing things to an issue; and who did so not from personal considerations, generally vacillating and corrupt, and more dangerous, because more violent and uncertain than others of a better description. Leo would have always acted according to the pressure of his circumstances, or the suggestion of his counsellors: his love of pleasure deprived him of energy

at one time ; his want of money and his pride filled him, at another, with the dispositions of a corrupt oppressor. There was no room for hoping that such a ruler would ever be brought to reason ; or that, if he persevered in oppression, any certain method could be employed for anticipating his movements.

The business of the diet commenced on the 17th of^{A. D.} March. It was opened by a solemn mass, called the¹⁵²² mass of the Holy Spirit. Carlostadt's zeal, it appears, had not affected the higher class of Luther's followers ; the magnificent office of the Roman church being attended by the reformers as well as by the most faithful of the Romanists. The affairs of the church were first alluded to on the circumstance being named that Luther had again appeared in the world, and was preaching at Wittenberg. Loud and angry were the complaints of the bishops to the diet when this was mentioned. Frederic was accused of betraying his trust, and violating the most solemn bonds of duty by thus continuing to protect a declared heretic, and one who had been excommunicated by the pope. To this the representatives of Frederic, Philip de Feilitsch and John de Planitz, opposed the declarations of Luther's own epistle ; and it was expected, by the more sanguine of the reformers, that so powerful an appeal to the common sense of the assembly must, at least, have saved the elector from either reproof or suspicion. But right reason had been long before sacrificed to the cause of pride and intolerance. The principal ecclesiastics present expressed their feelings in loud murmurs of indignation ; and the fiscal of the empire proposed to quiet their uneasiness by commencing proceedings against Frederic, and the cities of Culm and Augsburg, as declared supporters of heresy and schism. Had this motion of the official been sanctioned by the members of the diet, Germany would have risen in its strength to oppose a measure so flagrantly unjust and ruinous to the independence of its states. There was, however, too much political wisdom still

existing in the council of the nation to allow of its being entertained ; and the violent declamation of the bishops, aided as they were by the minister of George of Saxony, could force no other reply from the deputies chosen to examine the affair of Luther than this,-- When time and place served they would pay due attention to the prince's exhortations and demands. The duke made another effort to rouse the diet against Luther ; and both he and the archduke Ferdinand proceeded in person to Nuremberg ; but the assembly could not be moved, and neither Luther nor the elector were molested by its decisions.

The great reformer, in the mean time, was busied in opposing the fatal influence of the anabaptist preachers and their followers. Stubner had gained the pre-eminence among the leaders of the sect, and found himself so elated by the influence he enjoyed, that he now seriously meditated an encounter with Luther, and indulged the hope that he might, by his spiritual endowments, subdue both the reason and the pride of his antagonist.

Luther did not refuse the desired interview ; and Stubner was no sooner admitted to his presence than he began to pour forth a series of the wildest assertions and the most offensive persuasions. Melancthon witnessed the interview with mingled vexation and surprise. It was not a meeting of controversialists, fired by the strong and bitter spirit of an adverse faith and rival scholarship. There was nothing to rouse or exhilarate the mind, while the heart owned itself afflicted at the failure of Christian love. The dispute only served to elicit confessions of the grossest fanaticism that ever assailed the members of a religious sect pretending to a knowledge of the Gospel. Luther, however, conducted the conversation with as much forbearance as he could command ; and this notwithstanding the insulting taunts with which whatever he said was met, not only by Stubner himself, but by one of the more zealous of his associates, who accompanied

him on the occasion. At length the former ventured to declare that he would afford Luther a proof of his prophetic calling which could not be gainsaid. "I will tell you," said he, "what is now secretly passing in your mind; you are even now confessing the holiness of my pretensions." "Not so," said Luther; "for I was just exclaiming to myself, 'The Lord rebuke thee, Satan.'" This finished the dispute; and the enraged fanatics retreated, with the resolution of trying their forces on another and more promising field.*

The sound policy and Christian temper of Luther A. D.
1523. were strikingly manifested in his conduct respecting the diet of Nuremberg. There were not wanting those who, in the proceedings of the reformer, anxiously sought the seeds of a general convulsion. To them any appearance of concession was full of discouragement; and when they heard the cautious decree of the national council on the subject of religion, they lost no time in declaring their discontent at so loose and indefinite a decision. Luther, on the contrary, expressed his satisfaction at the termination of the debates; and, perceiving at once the troubles with which a political schism would be attended, he strenuously sought to appease the irritation which had begun to manifest itself in the minds of his countrymen. With this purpose in view, he addressed a letter to the princes of the empire respecting the proceedings at Nuremberg, and containing many remarks on the nature and tendency of their decisions. The tone of this address was temperate and respectful. "He had read," he says, "their decree, and had desired the church at Wittenberg to acknowledge its authority, but Satan had ensnared the minds of the people, and it was rejected." It was observed, in the instrument alluded to, that the Gospel should be interpreted according to the explications given and received by the church. On

* Luther's best and noblest argument was expressed in a letter to Christopher Hollman: "They have nothing from Scripture on their side. Their own spirit alone supplies them with reasons."—*Epist.* tom. ii. p. 308.

this he remarks, that persons in general supposed it was meant, that Scripture ought only to be interpreted according to the sense given by Thomas Aquinas, Duns Scotus, and others of a similar class ; but that he considered the meaning of the article to be, that the interpretation should answer to that given by the genuine fathers of the church, as Hilary, Cyprian, Augustine, and men of like piety, learning, and wisdom. It was declared, in another part of the decree, that no book should be printed unless previously examined and approved of by persons chosen for that purpose. On this he remarks, that he concluded no reference was here made to the Holy Scriptures, the publication of which could not be interdicted, and that in respect to other works, he would not condemn the prohibition. To these observations he added a strong appeal respecting the celibacy of the clergy, and the continuance of monastic vows. The abuses to which the law on these subjects had led were intermingled with the worst characteristics of the age ; and Luther clearly saw that till the law, as it now stood, was abrogated, or greatly modified, the pope would possess a power over the reformers which might considerably endanger their future safety.

Luther had now every reason to expect the most violent conduct on the part of his adversaries. Two Augustines had been lately seized at Brussels, and cruelly martyred for the simple confession of their belief in the main doctrines of the Gospel.* When asked what they believed, they replied, "The Old and New Testaments, and the Apostles' Creed." Questioned as to their belief in the decrees of councils, the popes, and the fathers, they answered, that "it was by the commandments of God only that men could be

* Sleidm, tom. i. liv. iv. p. 179. Seeckendorf, sec. 111. (2. 2.) The latter writer observes on the importance of the concessions made by the diet respecting the corruptions of the church. Maimbourg and Cochleus have attempted to trace them to the Lutherans merely ; but it is properly answered that the diet was mainly composed of princes professing no t loyal attachment to the pope.

pronounced innocent or guilty." This was sufficient. They were forthwith degraded from the priesthood, and their other ecclesiastical offices ; and having been given over to the civil power, with the customary prayer that nothing too severe might be inflicted on them, were immediately committed to the flames.⁶

The indefatigable spirit of Luther was always ready, whatever might be the immediate necessity for action. He saw at the present juncture, that the congregations which owned him as their principal guide and instructor ought not to be left any longer without a stated formulary for the conduct of the service in the church. After due meditation, therefore, on this important subject, he published a treatise containing forms for the mass and communion, and his reasons for not having earlier presented them for adoption. These were, that the people appeared to be still too weak and uninformed on matters of doctrine, to admit of sudden alterations, and that he deemed it better to employ his thoughts wholly on matters essential to salvation, before attempting a reform in things less weighty and necessary.

Simplicity, as far as it could be safely introduced, consistently with the taste of the age, was Luther's aim. The communion had ceased to retain any traces of the primitive ordinance amid the countless and puerile additions made by the Roman church. What was worse, it had been converted into a medium of error ; and it was utterly inconsistent with propriety or sincerity for the reformers to continue the practice of rites which retained any vestige of the ancient leaven. Liberty, however, was given to the recipients, wherever liberty could be safely granted. Thus every communicant might, if he chose, mingle water with the wine ; and the use of incense and of tapers was allowed at the discretion of the congregation. On the other hand, the least allusion to the mass as a sacrifice was prohibited with the strongest expressions of evangelical zeal ; and

it was further said, that if a person refused to partake of the wine as well as the bread, he should not be permitted to approach the altar. With regard to the preparation of communicants, he wisely ordered that none should be admitted who could not give an account of the hope that was in them, and state the principles of their faith: that private confession should not be demanded, though in many cases it ought to be considered as highly useful and salutary, and that in other respects, that is, as to prayer and the times of fasting, much should be left to the conscience and discretion of the communicants themselves.*

Thus cautiously did he proceed, while the state of the public mind, and the circumstances in which he stood, offered the strongest temptation, which a reformer could have to encounter, to take advantage of the movement, and urge forward his interests on the rushing tide of popularity. It would have been greatly to the advantage of his countrymen, and the cause of religion, had he always manifested a similar degree of self-possession. We are not of the opinion that the defects of Luther's character were any assistance to the cause he so nobly advocated. He might, it is true, often silence an adversary, or inspire terror by the daring licence of his invectives, but it is not to be supposed that men of moderate principles were less offended in those days than they would be now at such exhibitions of temper; and it is, we suspect, scarcely a disputable matter, whether the interests of the Reformation would not have been much better aided by the calm and steady strength of Christian wisdom, unmixed with fury of spirit, than by all the energy apparently given by the latter.

The progress of the reformed opinions, and the positive influence which they now generally exercised, was strikingly manifested at this time by the flight of nine nuns from their monastery. Among them was Ca-

* "I would," says he in a letter to Spalatin, "that the prince could be persuaded to abstain from his masses. This would at least be a beginning."
— *Epist.* tom. ii, p. 111.

therine Bore, who, ten years after, became the wife of Luther. The example thus boldly set was speedily followed by sixteen other nuns; and it soon became evident that the rules and vows of monasticism could no longer repress the love of freedom, legitimatised as it is not less by reason than by nature. We find, however, from one of the letters of Luther, written about this period, that while the clergy were beginning to assert their right to marry, signs were not wanting to show that they were not all instigated by the same ingenuous and noble spirit. Wolfgang, one of the number who took advantage of the liberty claimed for his order, married, it appears, a person whose age and character made it generally understood that he had wedded her only to possess himself of a considerable property. Luther speaks with the utmost indignation of this instance of baseness; and evidently felt it as an injury to his cause, and a stronger argument against him than any thing that had been urged by his enemies.

But whatever might be the slight discouragements occasioned by the opposition of fanatical or hypocritical pretenders to zeal, he had ample cause to rejoice in his present position. Danger there yet was that the supporters of Rome might suddenly rise and determine on his destruction; nor could he be sure that the measures he was now meditating might not alarm the caution of Frederic, and oblige him to rest, for a time, contented with what had been effected. He had, however, reason to hope for better things. The present situation of affairs allowed him to visit several places where the progress of reform was marked by the increasing desire of the people to hear and receive the Gospel. At Wittenberg public opinion was so confirmed as to oblige the college of canons to change its constitution; and the elector himself, though still timid in the character of his proceedings, afforded Luther, from day to day, fresh instances of respect and friendship. This was remarkably the case in his conduct with regard to the reformer's dispute with our Henry VIII.

That monarch, it is well known, was ambitious of the reputation of a scholar. He had, from his earliest years, been familiar with the writings of the schoolmen; and enjoying a certain degree of keenness and subtilty, it was one of his chief pleasures to dispute with the learned theologians of his age on the principal topics of divinity. But the triumphs of the tournament rather irritate than satisfy the skilful combatant; and it is with scholars as with warriors, the prize worth possessing must be sought where there is a real, not an imaginary, enemy. King Henry, moreover, added to his ambition as a scholar, the ardent zeal of a churchman, and a zeal which drew nourishment from every principle of the political system in which he had been educated. Whatever might be the wish of an arbitrary sovereign to resist the invasions of the pope, as to his own privileges, he could never be otherwise than thankful for the power wherewith the religion of Rome subdued the turbulence of the people, and repressed their inclination for inquiry. This is more especially the case in times when there appears a demonstration of impatience; when it begins to be doubted whether mankind have not rights which civilisation and law and good government might cherish without any danger to the state, but which have been sacrificed to the wicked expediency of courts, or the still more unholy perversions of Christian truth. In such times, a monarch whose capacity is not sufficient to enable him to look beyond the length of his own sceptre will have ample reason to rejoice in the auxiliary power of a church like that of Rome; and Henry was jealous to the uttermost of every grain of kingly authority and grandeur. He needed but other subjects than Englishmen to become a tyrant; and the rise of freedom was the uprooting of almost every principle by which he carried on his government.

It is easy to conceive, therefore, that the intelligence of Luther's proceedings would hardly afford satisfaction to a sovereign of Henry's disposition. Yet such is the ca-

priciousness of human pride, that this haughty-spirited ruler appeared for some time inclined rather to favour than oppose the party with whose sentiments he had so little in common. The true nature, however, of the controversy was speedily discovered; and as early as the year 1521 Henry came forward as the champion of the church. Luther's "Fall of Babylon" taught him that the reformer meditated changes which would neither minister to his ambition nor prove the value of his preconceived opinions. It abounded, moreover, in topics well calculated to rouse all the ardour of a scholastic disputant. Never, then, could a more favourable opportunity have occurred for the exercise of his abilities, or for promoting his own reputation, while he supported the universal cause of kingly and ecclesiastical authority. His courtiers were not wanting in flattery on this occasion; and the earnest persuasions whispered in his own palace were returned in loud echoes from the chambers of the Vatican. An answer to Luther, consequently, soon appeared from the royal pen; and while every Catholic court rang with the praises of its author, the pontiff bestowed upon him the title of "Defender of the Faith,"—a distinction of which the greatest of monarchs might be proud, if it implied that they had supported the Gospel by the exercise of their wisdom, their care of the church, or the force of their example.

Luther paid little respect to the rank or talents of Henry: he answered him with an angry and even contemptuous spirit; and few men could have avoided feeling as the monarch did, when thus bitterly assailed. In the fulness of his indignation he wrote to George of Saxony, and the elector. Religion, and every thing that deserved the name of holiness, were endangered, he said, by the daring licentiousness of the schismatic; and he implored them to stop his proceedings, as they valued their own dignity, and the salvation of men's souls.*

There was every reason to believe that the consequence

* Sleidan, tom. i. liv. iv. p. 114. Schenkendorf, sec. 112.

of Luther's intemperate reply to the monarch would produce effects of this kind. But it could scarcely have been expected that his fearless disregard of rank in the support of truth would have enlisted against him the powerful talents of Erasmus. That eminent scholar enjoyed a reputation superior, perhaps, to any writer of the age ; but he was indebted for his fame as much to the vigour and boldness of his style as to the profundity of his erudition. Reasoning, therefore, from his past conduct, it might have been supposed that he would join with Luther in the sarcastic chastisement of Henry's imperfect logic. But Erasmus was as open to the suggestions of pride as the monarch himself ; and when the latter saw fit to seek his assistance, the scholar weakly yielded to the temptation of having a king for his friend, rather than an excommunicated monk, however eloquent, renowned, and pious.

A pension, and the praise of all faithful sons of the church, was the reward proffered for a defence of the royal treatise. This offer, after a brief delay, was accepted ; and Erasmus, pretending to be moved by the sincerest sense of duty, soon sent forth his strictures on Luther and his writings. Such is the trust to be placed in genius or learning, when combined with worldliness of spirit ; such is the support they afford to the great interests of mankind. Erasmus, as a friend of his race, was now far below the humblest of those followers of Luther who stood ready to meet the brunt of the contest, and risk not the imaginary possession of fame and honour, in the trial of faith, but their homes, their liberty, and their lives.

Luther must have felt the attack and disingenuousness of his former correspondent as one of the most painful circumstances in his career. No man ever sacrificed to honesty more willingly than he had ; and the uprightness of his mind and intentions rendered him especially alive to its violation in those whom he regarded as his friends. Erasmus, moreover, had been among the first to encourage him in the career of

reform. He had looked to him for sympathy in the most difficult passages of his life, nor had he, till now, seen reason to doubt his sincerity. The defection would have afflicted him from whatever cause it had proceeded ; but occasioned as it was by a motive so little to be defended, it seemed to have happened that he might take it as a warning to place less trust than ever in human helps.

The letters of Erasmus written about this time overflow with expressions of hostility to reform. They represent the conduct of its supporters as wholly indefensible on any principles of religion, and heap on their heads the most reproachful epithets. At first the timid tone of his sentiments might be excused, from the consideration which he himself suggests in a letter to pope Leo. He was not, he says, acquainted with Luther, nor had he ever read more than a few pages of his writings. From these, he confesses, he had been taught to think that it would be well could the ancient method of studying Scripture be revived ; but that he agreed with him in nothing, except in that which bore evident signs of good, the proof of which was, that he had been the first to prognosticate the harm which might follow from his works, and had accordingly prevented their publication by Frobenius at Basil. He adds, that in his letters to Luther he had given him advice calculated to modify his proceedings ; that he had never defended his doctrine ; and that, as a reason for not having opposed it, he could state that he had not leisure for perusing his voluminous writings.

Alluding to his own proper vocation, he writes thus to a person who had asked his advice respecting doctrine : " What am I that I should prescribe rules about another man's faith, or give decisions contrary to those of the church ? God forbid that I should take upon me to determine any such thing ! My design is to make men more in love with polite learning, and to bring back the study of divinity from nice questions and useless subtilties to its pure and original fountain. I have always abstained

from being dogmatical in any thing, especially in opposition to the opinions commonly received in the church; though I acknowledge that theologians have determined things which, without any prejudice to religion, might have been left undetermined. All that is left for me is to wish that some things were done, for I will not give orders in any thing." To these sentiments of moderation he adds his opinion as to what he conceived might promote the cause of religion, without disturbing public tranquillity. "Nothing," he observes, "had contributed so much to Luther's success as the violence with which his enemies had pursued him; but that they who acted in a similar spirit against the pope, pouring upon him their shameless invectives, had incurred a much heavier responsibility. The way to restore peace, then, was to employ wise, well instructed, and pious men to instruct those who had fallen into heresy and schism." With regard to Luther he says, "That he should not be sorry to see his books published in Holland, if people would read them as he himself did; that is to say, by receiving what was good in them, and rejecting what was bad: that all he would say of him was, that the greater part of the tragedy had its origin in the passion of his adversaries, especially in that of the Dominicans and Carmelites: that, for himself, he was neither his patron, his friend, nor his judge: that he neither wrote the same things as Luther, nor wrote in his style; and that he wished he were more modest, and less subject to the transports of violent passion." *

There is nothing in these letters but what might have appeared with credit from the pen of any man of cautious and moderate principles, unwilling to embroil himself in controversy, or too hastily join a party of the wisdom of whose proceedings he was not, in every respect, at the moment, confident. But he had seen more than enough, by this time, to convince so keen a mind as his on which side lay the interests of

* Post. liv. 5. Du Bar, art. 134.

truth and religion; nor could he have attacked Luther under more suspicious circumstances than those in which he now chose to assail him. The persuasions of the great and powerful are bad sources of inspiration, when a question of the highest importance to mankind has to be decided on its own merits. Erasmus appeared as the champion of Henry and George of Saxony. In that capacity he might prove his loyalty, but not his independence, as a witness to the cause which he supported.

The work with which he commenced this famous controversy was entitled "The Diatribe," and consisted of a treatise on free-will; one of the subjects on which Luther and Carlstadt had some time before expended the choicest arguments of Scripture and philosophy. He did not intend, he said, to write against the person of Luther, but only to oppose his dogmas; and at the commencement of his argument he states that the rule of Scripture is this,—that a man should strive after perfection, when engaged in the work of salvation, and endeavour to free himself from the power of sin when returning to the ways of life; the mercy of God being always regarded as that alone by which our resolves or our labours can be rendered efficacious; that we ought to attribute whatever evil we do to our own depravity, and the good that may be in us to divine grace; and, lastly, that we should attribute the happiness or ill which may befall us to the wise dispensations of God, ordering all things for the furtherance of our salvation.

To opinions of this nature the most evangelical Christian could assent with the ready fervour of his own convictions. But no subject in theology has suffered more from the spirit of controversy than the question of free-will. It has almost always engaged the attention of parties when least prepared by moderation, and the enjoyment of tranquillity, for such a discussion; and we consequently find the subject not less involved in the darkness of angry spirits than in

the obscurity which essentially belongs to metaphysical inquiry. Alluding to the various opinions current on the question, Erasmus says, "Some, considering the negligence of men, and how much reason there is to fear that they may despair of working out their own salvation, have, in their anxiety to prevent this danger, ascribed too much to the freedom of the human will. Others, on the other hand, believing that self-confidence is the ruin of piety, and abhorring the presumption of those who boast of the merit of their works, and affirm the possibility of transferring it to others, have, from the desire to resist so dangerous a doctrine, annihilated the liberty of man, and denied him any share in the performance of good works, or ascribed his doing right to the force of an absolute necessity. Christian humility and subjection are regarded by this party as depending on the acknowledgment of man's entire dependence on the will of God, and his divine promises; on the solemn confession of unworthiness, and earnest gratitude for those freely bestowed mercies and graces to which his salvation must be owing. They farther affirm, that we should patiently yield to God's will, whether it be his purpose to save or condemn us: that we should not glory in any way in our good works, but ascribe the worth they possess to the power of heavenly grace, man being nothing more than the organ of the Holy Ghost, who, by his free grace, sanctifies and purifies, as by his wisdom he guides and conducts, him: that we ought to look forward to the attainment of eternal life, not because of our merits, but because God has promised it to all who trust in his mercy: that it is our duty to pray continually for increasing gifts of the Spirit, to offer thanksgivings for the abundant mercies of our heavenly Father, to adore his wisdom, and rejoice in, and love, his goodness." *

On these different views of the subject, Erasmus reasons with great calmness, and with a seeming earnestness of desire to modify the extremes of each argu-

* Du Pin, art. Eras.

ment into a scheme that might satisfy human reason, and yet illustrate Scripture. It would be unfair to doubt the sincerity of his professions ; and a mind like his can scarcely adopt opinions which it has not previously examined with some attention. The chief defect in his reasonings appears to be that which must always prevail in an argument undertaken from no inward impulse, no feeling of its use and its necessity. In steering a middle course, he by turns gives authority to the most adverse doctrines ; and no subsequent effort at modification is sufficient to lessen the force of each separate assent. The reader is therefore usually left in a state of greater perplexity than that in which he originally found himself, and truth remains as closely veiled as at the first.

Luther did not return an immediate answer to this treatise of Erasmus. It was of importance that the reply, whenever it appeared, should be worthy both of the subject and of the eminent man to whom it was to be addressed. He therefore resolved to wait till leisure and opportunity should assist him in the design ; and preferred enduring the triumph of his enemies at this delay, to sending forth a work which might only imperfectly explain his views of this most important question.

Pope Adrian died on the 13th of September, 1523. His successor was of the family of the Medici, and ascended the throne by the title of Clement VII.* Had Luther not been so far in advance of papal influence, he might have felt deeply concerned at every variety to be observed in the character of the head of the church. But he had now rather to consider the general turn of public affairs ; the personal character of princes ; the balance of power between their different states ; and the use which might be made of the changing current of events to draw men to the pursuit and love of truth. The bishop of Rome no longer possessed the sceptre which had been put into his hands by public opinion :

* Seekenhout, ser. 162. Seekenhout.

it had been transferred to those who could wield, with strong hearts, the weapons of a manly intelligence and true spiritual mindedness. Among them lay the power and the influence which Luther had to move ; and the signs of their consent, of their sympathy with his movements, were of infinitely higher importance to him, at this period, than any helps which might have been afforded him by the tolerance of the Roman court.

CHAP. VI.

LUTHER PUTS OFF THE MONKISH HABIT.—MEDITATES MARRIAGE.
 —PROGRESS OF THE REFORMATION.—WAR OF THE PEASANTS.
 —LUTHER WRITES ON THE SUBJECT.—MUNCK.—DEATH OF
 FREDERIC.—MARRIAGE OF LUTHER.—ANSWERS ERASMUS.

THE progress of the Reformation was sure and rapid. First one and then another discovery was made in the inquiry after doctrines and principles. Luther proceeded with a firm step; and his colleagues, for the most part, were inspired with a similar spirit of resolution. The crowds who attended their ministry partook of the preacher's zeal, and that which had been announced as truth from the pulpit was straightway adopted by the people as a rule of practice. Thus their opinions became fixed and confirmed by the establishment of new rites. The old landmarks whereby superstition had steered her course being thrown down, nothing was acknowledged as a guide but the light of heaven itself. Restrictions and privileges, tried by so pure a test, soon presented a different aspect to that under which they had formerly been viewed; and the customs of life and religious worship once changed, the principles which have led to the change become established for ages.

Luther had early discovered that so long as the monastic system remained unaltered, the church of the Reformation would be like a city exposed continually to attacks from a fortress still in the hands of the enemy. His firmness and discretion were signally proved by the measures he employed to suppress this evil; and at the period at which we are now arrived, he was himself the only Augustine monk who continued to wear the garb, and respect the rules, of the order. Many of his brethren had married, and all had entered the world to partake

in its cares and its duties, deeming themselves more bound to holiness by the cross of Christ, and their simple faith in the Gospel, than they had been by the vows which wedded them to a life of solitude. Towards the close of the year 1521 he formed the resolution of following the example of those whose freedom was the consequence of his own precepts. With his usual caution, he sought the opinion of the elector on the proposed step; and the prince soon after sent him a roll of cloth, and told him to wear his mantle in what form he pleased. Luther thenceforth rejected the habit of a monk, and with the garb the title.* He was now known only by his academical distinctions; and having thus emancipated himself from the few remaining trammels of his original state, soon after turned his thoughts to matrimony.

Whatever were the opinions of his contemporaries on the subject, he appears to have acted with consistency in this matter. He had argued for many years, and in the strongest language, against the unlawfulness of vows which did violence either to the law of nature, or the law of God. If his arguments were valid in any case, they must be so in his own. The cause of Christian liberty once established on the broad basis of universal truth, the sober dictates of reason, fairly weighing the particular circumstances of his condition, were now to form the rule of his conduct. Religion had been consulted, and given its decision; but a tender conscience has often to linger long before it gains familiarity with the conclusions to which an inquiry has been brought. Truth as often surprises as the novelties of fancy; and Luther seems to have been frequently placed in the situation of one who, startled for the moment at his own discoveries, must wait till he recover sufficient coolness to act.

While the reformer was meditating on subjects in which he had a greater personal concern than in most of his other measures, the political partisans of Rome

* See Endorf, lib. i. sec. 182. p. 311. ed. 1692. Baur, l. ii. 351.

were busied in exciting the different members of the empire to a bold and active union of their forces. Campegio had employed his utmost skill and energy at Nuremberg to throw contempt on the Lutherans. He insisted on the necessity of carrying into effect the provisions of the edict of Worms; and when the princes, in reply, demanded the redress of injuries and the correction of abuses under which the church of their country groaned, he answered them with arguments founded on the supposition that the stability and dignity of Rome were essential to the preservation of whatever is valuable to man. The destruction of Luther, and the humbling of the Turks, now threatening the West with formidable invasions, were represented as equally important. But neither the representation of actual danger, nor the ingenious sophistry of the legate, had availed him on this occasion, and another meeting of the diet was appointed to take place in November, at Spire.

Notwithstanding the resistance which had been made to the domination of the pope in the diet at Nuremberg, the edict sent forth was productive of continued discontent among the partisans of the Reformation. Luther now desired to see something more decided. The bare allusion to the edict of Worms had filled him with indignation; and he poured forth his vehement abuse of Rome, as if the temporising policy of the princes had given a sanction to its corruptions. Campegio, in the meanwhile, formed his plans with sufficient ability to divide the principal states of the empire, and arrange them against each other in an attitude of confirmed hostility. The elector of Saxony foresaw the evils threatened by the impending storm, and lamented that his rapidly decaying strength unfitted him for taking that part in the conflict which the state of things demanded. His only consolation was derived from the noble firmness which had, from the first, formed the principal characteristic of the reformers. He saw them, moreover, daily increasing in numbers; and there were now added to their ranks several princes, distinguished

alike for their virtue and influence. Among these were the landgrave of Hesse, and Albert of Brandenburg, both of them men of great energy. About this time, also, George of Polenz, bishop of Samland, declared his conversion to the opinions of Luther. All Denmark acknowledged him. The cities of Magdebourg and Nuremberg embraced the cause of reform by a decree of their respective senates; and their example was, perhaps, of greater advantage than that of the most powerful princes. The flame thus lit, rapidly extended itself; and before the close of the year 1524, Luther had firm allies in Livonia, in Mecklenburg, in the duchy of Holstein, in Pomerania, in Westphalia, at Leipzig, in Brunswick, and at Strasbourg.

A. D.
1525. The year 1525 was fruitful in important events. Europe beheld, at its commencement, the greatest of her potentates preparing to decide a quarrel, the issue of which was important to the world at large. The captivity of Francis I. gave rise to a new confederacy; and statesmen had still to calculate the chances of war; rather than the effects which might be produced by sound policy, and the arts of peace.

But while the princes of Europe laid waste the fairest provinces of the south by their prolonged contentions, the peasants of the north were prosecuting their rebellion with a spirit which defied both the arms and the policy of their rulers. This servile war was now raging from the remotest corners of Belgium to the farthest boundaries of Germany. Kings, princes, and mitred abbots trembled at the tremendous force with which the infuriated multitudes came forth. At first, the unfortunate peasants only proclaimed the sufferings of themselves and their families as the cause of their rising. Their forefathers had left them an heritage of servitude, and the weight of the yoke had increased with each successive generation. The fruit of their toil was wasted to support the luxury of ungrateful nobles; and that the spoliation might be carried on with the greater security, they were kept in a condition in which it was

next to impossible that the proper faculties of the human soul should be exercised or developed.

History is sufficiently explicit on subjects like this to convince us, that it needed not any fresh stimulant to rouse such an oppressed race to resistance. The war of the peasants would have occurred had neither Luther nor Muncer ever seen the light. But a religious enthusiast, like the latter, was not likely to neglect the advantage which such an event presented. He needed an army of supporters, — an array of strength which might inspire those who had hitherto despised him with fear and apprehension. Seizing, therefore, the moment, at which their rage was at its height, he presented himself to them as an apostle and a prophet. They were little prepared to judge of the truth of his pretensions; but he came to them as a friend: he spoke of things which gave an additional impulse to the desire of liberty; and removing whatever doubts might remain as to the lawfulness of their proceedings, taught them to believe that they were asserting not simply a natural, but a divine right, to the possession of the earth.

Luther contemplated the progress of the rebellion with deep dismay. He was too good a citizen to regard with complacency any proceeding which tended to the violation of the laws. But he was too enlightened and honest, on the other hand, to look patiently at the oppression of millions of his countrymen, or to allow the system by which their rights were trampled under foot, to remain unexposed to the light of reason. When called upon, therefore, by the revolted peasants to support their cause, he plainly declared to them that their conduct was unlawful, and a direct violation of the commands of Christ.* But to the princes and nobles he said, “You are the authors of these troubles. You call yourselves princes of the church, but you cease not to persecute the Gospel. And you, ye magistrates, your only object is to amass riches and nourish your pride and luxury. It is

* Sleidan, t. i. liv. v. p. 234. Sackendorf, lib. ii. sec. 1. p. 11.

thus that the people have been reduced to despair ; but continue not to flatter yourselves with hopes of impunity. You are threatened with the near approach of danger. The sword is suspended over your heads. You imagine they cannot bring you down ; but your security will prove your ruin. It is God who pours contempt on unholy princes. Many times have I warned you to save yourselves from the wrath of heaven. But you hasten to destruction, and no exhortation can reach your hearts. The judgments of God are foreseen in the power which he gives to false teachers against the preachers of truth. His anger bestows arms that the world may perish thereby. He blinds his creatures in order to punish them. Germany will fall under the evils which begin to afflict her if the Almighty, appeased by our prayers, abate them not. Your oppression has reached a point beyond which men neither will, nor can, support it. There must be a change. The Gospel must be received. If the peasants were to yield, they would be followed by others who would not yield. This hydra will put forth new heads, however many you may cut off. God is the author of the war. It is the instrument whereby he punishes your impiety. There are those among you who declare that they will destroy their states and their dignities, that they may ruin Luther. A part of their threat is on the point of being accomplished. Their destruction is at hand. . . . What, if God, irritated at your conduct, permit Satan to rouse against you the fury of the people, is it I ? Is it the Eternal that should be accused as the author of the evil ? I have not only supported your cruelty, but I have prayed to God for you. I have honoured your authority ; have taught the people to respect it ; have defended it with all my influence. If I desired to resent the injuries with which you have oppressed me ; if I desired vengeance, I should now laugh in secret— I should contemplate with pleasure the tragedy that is performed — I should join myself to the enraged multitudes — I should cast oil on the flames. Let me conjure you, then,

O princes, not to despise my exhortations, nor to consider lightly the present sedition. It is not that I fear the oppression of the peasants. Would you had not reason to fear them ! but fear God ; for if it be his will to punish you, there is no escape, however feeble be your enemies. In the name of God, then, humble yourselves before him, and thus avert the tempest which overhangs you. Events are known. The will of God is secret. Use your power to subdue the danger, to avoid the chastisement which threatens Germany with ruin. Gentleness and mercy can never be hurtful, and should they cost you much, you will still be gainers. But if you persist in employing violence, and proceed to extremities, you will endanger for ever your safety and your dignities.”*

It was thus that, with equal dignity and fervour, this great man addressed the rulers of his country, when he beheld their injustice, and imprudent as well as cruel policy. He violates not the respect due to princes, but he speaks as a minister of Christian truth and charity ; and his conduct in this affair presents a striking contrast to that which has been pursued in every age of the world, by ambitious and self-seeking demagogues. It was not the applause, but the good and the conversion of his countrymen, which he sought. In labouring to this end, he feared neither the people nor princes. The plain principles of the Gospel were his guide, as they may be that of any honest man, whom duty compels to take a share in politics ; and by this light he pursued his course, a noble example to all who would use to the utmost their privilege as ministers of truth and holiness.

The demands of the peasants were divided into twelve heads. They insisted, in the first place, on the right of choosing their own religious teachers, and such as should preach to them the pure word, unpolluted by human traditions. This was a manifest declaration in favour of Lutheranism ; and they thereby made com-

* Beausobre, t. ii. p. 167.

mon cause with the great body of their countrymen engaged in opposing the corruptions of Rome. But the cry for evangelical teachers was soon drowned in the tumultuous and phrensied onset which they made under Muncer and his associates ; a melancholy proof of the facility with which the early demonstrations of popular zeal may be employed, by evil-minded men, to the ruin of the highest and best of objects.

Under the second head of grievances is placed the payment of tithes. For this, it is said, there is no authority but the abrogated law of the Old Testament. Instead, however, of insisting on the abolition of the system, they merely demanded that the revenue so collected should be properly distributed among their pastors, and that a portion should be set apart for the relief of the poor.*

In the succeeding articles, they contend for the rank of freemen ; for the restoration of rights belonging to the cultivators of the soil ; for exemption from oppressive taxes ; for liberty to hunt and fish in the open plains, forests, and rivers of their country ; and for the abolition of laws which were partial and unjust. In concluding these demands, they declared that they were willing to withdraw them, should it be shown by Scripture that they were in any wise unlawful ; and that, should they be granted, but afterwards appear contrary to right, they would do the same ; adding, however, that they contended for an equal right to continue their demands, should it be hereafter seen that they still laboured under injustice, or were deprived of privileges which belonged to them as men and Christians.

It was not Luther alone, who contended that the unfortunate peasants deserved attention and redress. His ardent temperament, his deep concern in every movement produced by the operation of opinion, would naturally lead him to turn his attention to the subject. But the gentle, the contemplative Melancthon, was equally roused on this occasion. With none of the

* Beausobre. Sleidan.

qualities which make men politicians, he viewed with the eye of a philosopher, with the heart of a philanthropist, and the soul of a Christian,—a title which, in its best sense, unites all the rest,—the afflictions of his oppressed countrymen. He knew the hinderance which their sufferings must prove to the spread of knowledge and genuine Christian truth ; and his addresses, on the occasion of their revolt, display his character in one of the finest points of view in which it can be contemplated.

But the tempest was not to be appeased till it had expended its fury, and that with all the desolating effects which Luther and Melancthon had anticipated. The insurgents were every day joined by new forces : cities, and the strongest fortified castles, opened their gates as they approached ; and, throughout the Rhinegau and Bavaria, their insurrection was as successful as it was general. Muncer acted with no less caution than fanaticism. Having made himself the chief of the insurgents, he waited till their cause appeared crowned with success, before he took those measures to which his ambition and cupidity prompted him. The elector of Saxony had expelled him his dominions, on the charge of treason. His first retreat was at Nuremberg, whence he passed into Thuringia. In the city of Alstead, in that province, he found the people prepared for his purpose. They listened to his pretended revelations with eager attention : he was allowed to exercise the principal civil authority in the place ; and, at the end of a few months, the inhabitants were so well confirmed in their belief of his apostolic authority, that they began the new mode of living which he taught them was proper to the condition of the saints. All possessions were regarded as common ; and when the wealthy resisted the spoiling of their goods, they were immediately deprived of them by force.

Affairs were in this state, when news arrived that the peasants of Swabia and Franconia had risen, and were already in possession of the strongest fortresses of the

country. Muncer, however, would have still feared to take the field, but for the persuasions of a priest named Pfeifer, who, having abandoned his calling, now revelled in all the pride and glory of licentious freedom. This impostor exercised towards Muncer the same degree of fraud as Muncer himself employed among the people. He persuaded his victim that Heaven had favoured him with special visions; and that, in his nightly dreams, he had seen displayed the honour which awaited them in the discomfiture of the old nobility, and the triumph of the new doctrines. Thus urged on, Muncer exerted himself anew to increase his forces, and appealed to the hardy race of men who wrought in the mines belonging to the count of Mansfeld. He employed for this purpose the influence of four of the workmen, whom he addressed in the warmest language of friendship. "Why," said he in his letters, "why will you still sit with folded arms, resisting the call of God? Does it become believers to act as if they thought the Lord had abandoned them? Ah! how many times have I told you your duty! If you refuse the crown of martyrdom which God offers you, you will have to bear the crown which the devil will force upon your heads. Destruction awaits you, if you despise the commands with which Heaven has directed me to address you. Already have France, Italy, and Germany risen in arms. The master leads on the dance; the reprobates must follow." *

* Luther saw reason to express himself in much severer terms than before, as these events continued to take place; but he certainly adopted a style, with regard to the unfortunate peasants, which makes us tremble at the thought of how he would have acted, had he not been softened by his profession. "*Ego sic sentio*," says he, "*melius esse omnes rusticos cadi, quam principes et magistratus, eo quod rustici sine auctoritate Dei gladium accipiunt. Quam nequitiam Satanæ sequi non potest nisi mera Satanica vastitas regni Dei, et mundi principes etsi excedunt, tamen gladium auctoritate Dei gerunt. Ibi utrumque regnum consistere potest, quare nulla misericordia, nulla patientia rusticis debetur, sed ira et indignatio Dei et hominum iis, qui non acquiescunt monitis Hos ergo justificare, horum misereri, illis favere, est Deum negare, blasphemare, et de culo velle dejicere.*"—*Bräve*, t. ii. p. 671. *de Wette*

He also wrote in a similar manner to Albert, exhorting him to have no mercy on the insurgents, and published another formal address on the subject, urging the princes and magistrates to pursue the work of destruction without pity.

While Muncer was preparing for the conflict, his associate Pfeifer had already taken the field, and was now at the head of a band which rapidly overspread the district of Ilfeld, spoiling the churches and castles, and treating the persons of the nobility with the basest indignity and cruelty. The intelligence of Pfeifer's success inspired Muncer with courage; and he hastened, at the head of 3000 men, to Franckhuysen, where the insurgents were mustered in most formidable numbers. Scarcely, however, had he joined this party, when their united forces were surrounded by the count of Mansfeld and other princes, who had assembled their troops at his call. The position occupied by the rebels was the brow of a mountain, in the immediate neighbourhood of Franckhuysen: this eminence, itself difficult of ascent, they had fortified with a strong rampart of carriages locked closely together; and by such other methods as could be employed by persons ignorant of the art of war.*

But Muncer at once perceived the danger to which he stood exposed: nor were his fears diminished, when messages arrived from the princes, which purported, that a pardon would be granted to the rest, if they would lay down their arms and give up the chiefs for punishment. Finding that his safety now entirely depended on the fidelity of the discomfited masses by whom he was surrounded, he resolved to try the force of that ready eloquence in the hour of peril, which had availed him so well when he had no enemy to oppose but the common sense of his hearers. "See," exclaimed he, "see, my brethren and companions in arms, there are the tyrants who hunger for your lives, but who so tremble at your presence that they dare not approach us. They offer you conditions which prove how great is their folly and madness, and only that they may deprive you of your arms. It is not by my own accord that I have roused you to the conflict; war is not my profession: God has called you to it, and it is

* Stenkar. Seckendorf, lib. ii. sec. 4

your duty to yield. In ancient times he commanded Abraham to slay his son; and the patriarch obeyed, not knowing what would follow thereon. His son was preserved, and his faith rewarded; and we now, finding ourselves in a similar case, must exercise similar confidence, and place our cause in the hands of God. Fear not the event. We shall prosper: our enemies will fall before us. The Lord has promised, by his Scriptures, that he will succour the afflicted, and subdue the impious. To us do these promises belong; for we are feeble and distressed: and seeing that we labour to spread abroad the knowledge of God, we must not doubt of success and victory. Consider, on the other hand, the situation of our enemies. They call themselves princes, but they are in reality tyrants; for they regard you not: they despoil you of your goods, and they waste what they have thus wrung from your hands in riotous living. — Take courage, then; and, for the sake of the Lord, slay yon useless troop. I assure you of victory, for I have received the promise thereof from the mouth of God himself, who can neither err, nor deceive; and who has directed me to commence this enterprise by the punishment of magistrates. Listen not to that which terrifies you with the shadow of danger, but attack with resolution this impious and abandoned enemy. Fear not those warlike machines: I am ready to receive in my mantle all the bullets they can fire against you. See you not the sign of God's eternal mercy? Lift up your eyes on high, and behold the rainbow which shines above you. It is the sign we bear on our standards; and the Lord shows us, by the same sign in the heavens, that he will be with us in the battle, and lead us on to the destruction of our foes."

A rainbow was in reality spanning the heavens as Muncer poured forth this torrent of declamation. The seeming prodigy revived the fainting courage of the weak, and excited the bold to deeds of desperation. A young nobleman, who had been sent with offers of pardon, on condition of their surrender, was barbarously

put to death by order of the chief; and all hopes of conciliation being thus cast away, the insurgents awaited with mingled fury and despair the onset of the enemy.

The troops of the allied princes were led on by Philip, landgrave of Hesse, who, previous to commencing the charge, endeavoured to convince his people of the guilt of those whom they were about to attack. "I will not pretend," he said, "to assert that we princes are free from blame: but, though we may have been guilty of partial injustice, this will not excuse those who fall into the sin of rebellion, and violate the laws and their own oaths."* Having said this, he gave orders for the artillery to commence the cannonade. In an instant the camp presented a scene of indescribable confusion. Numbers of dead and wounded strewed the ground, and terror seemed to have deprived the survivors of what little power they possessed to provide for their own preservation. Suddenly they raised their voices in a hymn to the Holy Ghost, and, as the solemn chant pealed along the mountain, a momentary gleam of hope reanimated their hearts. They still trusted that miraculous succour would be sent to their aid, and that their leader's words would receive a more signal fulfilment, by its arriving when they could no longer trust to human deliverance.

But they were again doomed to the mortification of finding themselves the victims of an impious delusion. The hymn had scarcely died away on their lips, when the enemy was discovered rushing up the sides of the mountain. In vain had the defences been prepared: in vain had Muncer inspired the best of his associates with an enthusiasm bordering on madness. No sooner were the swords and bayonets of the soldiers seen glittering on the heights, than a precipitate descent was commenced; and while one division of the multitude took their hasty flight towards Franckhuysen, the other fled into the valley which bordered the mountain on the

* Steidan. Beausobre.

opposite side. In both these directions they were pursued by the loyal followers of the allied princes; and the division which had reached the valley being overtaken by a band of armed gentlemen and their followers, a fierce conflict ensued, in which the death of a small number of the latter was revenged by the slaughter of near 5000 of the unfortunate peasants. Muncer himself had escaped to the town, and concealed himself in a house near the gates. Thither also came one of the noblemen who had been engaged in the battle; and desiring lodgings in the house, his servant was sent into the upper rooms to examine their condition. In one of these apartments lay, stretched on a bed, the miserable Muncer. Startled at his appearance, the servant inquired his name, and asked whether he was one of the fugitive insurgents. "No," replied the terrified enthusiast, "I have long suffered under a violent fever." It happened, however, that his purse caught the eye of the intruder; who, opening it with the intention of pilfering some of the coin, discovered one of the letters sent to Muncer by the count of Mansfeld. A short struggle followed this discovery; but Muncer, seeing that concealment was now impossible, confessed that he was the author of the late commotion.

At his examination before the landgrave of Hesse and prince George of Saxony, he declared that he had acted solely from convictions of duty, and that Christians were bound to resist magistrates who proved themselves enemies of the Gospel. When the landgrave observed, in answer to this, that such a principle was no where to be found in the Gospel, but that, on the contrary, Christians were solemnly exhorted to obedience and resignation, Muncer remained silent.*

But it was not thus the princes continued to carry on their examination. The wretched man was stretched on the wheel; and when the agony of his frame constrained him to utter the most piercing lamentations, George of Saxony exclaimed, "Ah! Muncer, you suffer

* Sleidan, tom. i. liv. v. p. 192.

now ; but think of the thousands who have miserably perished through your means." The sufferer replied, with a loud and triumphant laugh, " It was their wish to do so." Shortly after this, he was conveyed to the town of Helderlinghen, in the territory of the count of Mansfeld, and was again put to the question. Pain and extreme exhaustion at length obliged him to unfold the whole of his proceedings, and give the names of his accomplices. Several of the latter, among whom was Pfeifer, were immediately seized, and executed at Mulhausen. Muncer was allowed to live a few days longer. His courage and enthusiasm were gone ; but sunk as he was, he expressed feelings which may reasonably create a doubt in his favour, and induce us to hope, for the honour of human nature, that fanaticism is not often the result of mere selfishness, or the parent of direct imposture. Though too weak and troubled in spirit to be able to repeat the ordinary confession of faith without assistance, he summoned all his little remaining strength to exhort the nobles and princes, who were present at his execution, to act more justly towards their people. " Read in your Bibles," he said, " the history of the kings of Judah and Israel, and treat your subjects with kindness and clemency ; you will then have nothing to fear." Having said this, he patiently yielded himself to the executioner, and was immediately beheaded.

In the midst of these events, Germany was deprived, by death, of the wise and benevolent Frederic.* This early supporter of Luther and the reformation deserves to be remembered with profound respect. He possessed neither brilliant talents, nor the more shining qualities of a statesman and sovereign. But good sense, experience, prudence, and foresight appeared in the whole system of his policy. He always acted, as it is

* The first announcement which we have of this event, in the letters of Luther, is in a short note addressed to Spalatin, May 7., that is, ten days after the prince's death : — "*Habes hic nostram sententiam de ceremoniis Principis sepeliendi, mi Spalatin. O mors amara, non tam morantibus, quam his quos relinquunt mortui vivos!*" — *Brace*, t. ii. p. 689. edit. de Witte.

best for a prince to act, not with an ambitious aim to display his own virtues and piety, but in a way which he thought most likely to secure the general and permanent interests of religion. It was not his disposition to make great and sudden sacrifices, but to follow with steady, resolute, yet almost silent step, the signals of divine providence. In his personal conduct, the benignity of his disposition diffused a grace over all his actions, and the paternal attributes of sovereignty mingled in his character with the mildest virtues of friendship and domestic piety. His brother John Frederic succeeded to the electoral dignity; a prince whose genuine and exalted holiness points him out as an instrument in the hands of God, for carrying on the great work so auspiciously begun.*

Germany, at this time, presented a singular spectacle. Revolution had been attempted: the revolution which overthrows governments, breaks asunder the supports of law, and treats property and life as the fit materials of a sacrifice to the genius of universal good. The misery which had led to this attempt was not exaggerated in the complaints of the sufferers; nor was it inflicted on them, by the cruel selfishness of their oppressors, without a direct violation of the law of God: but had their enterprise succeeded, evils of greater magnitude would have occupied the place of the old misfortunes of the people. They would have found themselves in the situation of conquerors, who, on taking possession of a vanquished territory, behold it stripped of its verdure and its harvests, and rendered unfruitful for many years to come; or like a ship's crew, who, having left their own dismantled vessel to seize on one conquered from the enemy, discover, too late, that the fire of their own guns has rendered it unfit for sea.

* In his letter to John Frederic, dated May 15, Luther writes in a style which indicates his early confidence in the piety of that prince.—“In the world ye shall have tribulation, but in me ye shall have peace. It is in this school,” says he, “wherein God teaches us to trust in him that our faith may not dwell on the tongue, or in the ear only, but that it may be grounded in the bottom of our hearts.”

But while revolution, in its ancient and most recognised character, was thus raging through the land, and effecting no other purpose but that of destruction, revolution of another species, and hitherto unknown to nations—the revolution of opinion and principles—had far advanced in its career, and begun to exhibit the glorious effects of its triumphant march. At no period of the world has a nobler proof been given of the relative value of the means whereby mankind endeavour to improve their condition. A sense of injustice, and the positive distresses attending oppression, naturally induce a desire of resistance ; and such is the miserable lot of those who suffer under such circumstances, that the moment in which their burthens are most intolerable, and when reason yields to indignant passion, is that in which they are obliged to form their hasty plans, and place on the cast of a die their homes, their liberty, and their lives. Rarely, therefore, has force succeeded : but let opinion begin its progress ; let knowledge acquire the ascendancy, and the people become sensible of their rights, not merely by suffering, but by the reasonableness of their claims. The improvement of their condition is then secured as certainly as if a decree had gone forth from all the governments of the earth. Still more certainly is this the case, if the developement of national mind takes the form of religion, and the rights and freedom sought for are regarded as pertaining to man in his relation to a future world. The higher claims embrace the lower ; and a people who feel intensely the dignity of their calling, and consider it their duty to struggle for the grand privileges of believers, can scarcely remain long subject to ignominy or oppression ; the very power with which they think, and speak, and move, being destructive of the barbarous fictions which anciently confirmed their bondage.

To the districts already known as favouring the doctrines of Luther, was now added the whole territory of Prussia, which, following the example and directions of its prince, Albert of Brandenburg, became scarcely less

awake to the interests of the reformation than the country in which it had commenced. Prussia had been engaged in a long struggle for independence with Poland. Its early conquerors, the Teutonic knights, having rendered themselves obnoxious to the people, they were obliged to surrender a share of their dignity to the sovereign of that country. At length a master of the order was elected, who found himself in a situation sufficiently powerful to resist the claims of Poland. This was Frederic, duke of Saxony; and from the period of his election in 1500, to that of the reformation, the struggle had been carried on with various success.* But Albert had too much wisdom to continue a contest, the termination of which seemed hopeless. He therefore entered into a treaty with Poland, whereby he secured to himself that portion of the country which he was properly able to defend, and the rights of a sovereign prince, with the title of duke of Prussia. His installation took place in 1525; and while he himself resigned his ecclesiastical character as the chief of a religious order, the bishops of his dominions made a similar resignation of the power and possessions which belonged to them as temporal potentates. These changes were not effected without awakening new alarm in the court of Rome, and its enmity had to be guarded against as that of a determined though weakened adversary.

The numerous cares to which these events gave rise, did not prevent Luther from attending to those considerations, of a more personal nature, to which we have already alluded. No longer a monk, and with a mind, by this time, tolerably well strengthened against the prejudices of his early state, he now began to regard marriage as lawful in his own case, as he had always considered it to be in that of his friends Melancthon, Spalatinus, and others of his associates in the ministry. His sensitive and ardent mind readily furnished him with a vast store of arguments in favour of marriage, the moment his conscience withdrew contented from

* Sleidun. SeeLendorf, lib. i. p. 297.

the struggle. To the reasons suggested by his own feelings on the subject, were added the urgent solicitations of his venerable father, who had long laboured to persuade him both of the lawfulness and expediency of the course. What was still more important, perhaps, to his forming a quick decision, he was in the constant habit of seeing, and conversing with, a woman of great virtue and spirit, and many personal attractions. This was Catharine Bore, who, since her flight from the convent, owed her principal support to the contributions of Luther and his followers. It is said that the former, feeling the danger of her attractive company, and not being able to justify, at first, any thought of matrimony, had persuaded one of his friends to seek her in marriage, but that Catherine had indignantly rejected the offer, and confessed, that if she married, it must either be Luther or Amsdorf.*

Whatever may be the truth of this story, Luther at length decided on leading her to the altar; and having invited five friends to sup with him on the occasion, the espousals were performed with all proper solemnity. As might have been expected, intelligence of this event no sooner reached the public ear, than he was assailed, on all sides, with reproofs, with abuse, with satires, and with every species of verbal missile that alarmed friends and rancorous enemies could at the moment command.

That Luther was wholly proof against these attacks, ought not, perhaps, to be supposed. It is not necessary, in order to establish the character of a man for firmness and consistency, to show that he experienced no uneasiness when attacked, or felt no momentary misgivings when, after taking an important step, he is told that he has vitally injured his reputation, and marred the cause for which he had been labouring during the better part of his life. There seems reason, indeed, to believe that Luther did fail somewhat of his usual confidence and buoyancy of spirits shortly after his marriage; but that he actually repented of this step, or saw occasion to

* Beausobre, t. iii. liv. vi. p. 219.

doubt its legality, there is no sufficient ground to suppose. His melancholy, whatever depression of mind he experienced at this period, was certainly short-lived, for his letters, dated not long after the event, contain many expressions of confirmed cheerfulness and content.* Melancthon appears to have been instrumental in bringing about this change in his feelings, and establishing the convictions to which he had arrived before venturing on the step. As mild and self-possessed in all his actions, as Luther was bold and ardent, this admirable man had now at full command every argument and suggestion whereby the doubting conscience of his friend might be convinced. "You have contracted," he said, "no unlawful engagement in this marriage; and though you may have given occasion of scandal to hypocrites, you have encouraged the weak and wavering to look with more assurance on the principles you have advanced. Whatever the enemies of Christian truth affirm, just men will estimate your conduct aright; and, lastly, you ought to rise superior to the judgment of the world, or, at least, only employ it to teach you a proper degree of humility and self-distrust.

This was the purport of Melancthon's address to Luther himself. In writing to their common friend, Camerarius, he founds his apology for Luther on the consideration of his lively and ardent disposition, allowing, however, that it would have been much better had he not chosen a time for this marriage when Germany was oppressed with so many distresses, and when the cause of religion and peace demanded their entire attention.

But the best apology for Luther is the fact, that his zeal and firmness were as conspicuous after this event,

* Especially those written in June, 1526, in which he announces to several of his friends the birth of his first born son. The first is addressed to Dr. Joh. Rihel, to whom he says that his dear Kitty had brought him yesterday a little Luther. To Spalatin he speaks with still greater warmth: — "I thank thee, in the Lord, my Spalatin, for your kind congratulations, so heartily offered to me a happy husband, and now through God's grace a father, made so by the birth of a little son (filium Joannem Lutherulum) from the best of wives and the dearest of women." — *Briefe*, t. iii. p. 115, 116. *de Wette*.

as they were when he first appeared before the world in the full tide of his holy enthusiasm. The controversy with Carlostad was now at its height. It is that, however, in which he appears to have been least inspired by that pure and generous spirit which gives dignity to most of his other labours. Carlostad had neither the genius nor the elevated soul of Luther; but he had good sense, learning, and piety; and, notwithstanding the torrent of abuse with which he was overwhelmed by his former associates, his views were, in the main, strictly conformable with the doctrines of the Gospel. The opinions, moreover, which he advocated, were, to a great degree, those of Zuingli, whose career we shall shortly trace; of the learned *Æcolampadius*, and other pious reformers, who, in respect to the sacrament of the Lord's supper, saw the nature of divine mysteries more clearly than Luther.

It was not in this dispute that he properly put forth his strength. His temper occasionally betrayed him; but he speedily recovered his calmness, and turning again to the grander objects in hand, he resumed his labours with an earnestness which concentrated his thoughts, and left no feeling to wander at the call of caprice or pride. The treatise of Erasmus now claimed his attention; and as he had excused himself from answering it at once, on account of his other occupations, he exerted the highest faculties of his mind to render the confutation not unworthy of the subject, or the attention which he knew it would obtain from the world.*

* Luther sarcastically explains the reason of his delay at the opening of the volume. "Many persons will wonder," he says, "at Luther's showing such unaccustomed fear and patience, and will be already congratulating Erasmus on his triumph, exclaiming, '*Scilicet ille Maccabeus et pervicacissimus assertor, invenit tandem dignum antagonistam, contra quem hiscere non audeat*.' I do not blame them for this," he continues, "for you have indeed rendered my spirit weak and languid; and this in two ways: for, first, you have employed a most wonderful modesty, so as to prevent any ebullition of rage on my part; and next, whether by fortune, or accident, or fate, you have said nothing respecting free-will which has not been said before by every sophist that has written on the subject, and been confuted and ground to powder both by me and Melancthon, whose work deserves not only immortality, but a place in the ecclesiastical canon; and in

comparison with which your work is so utterly contemptible, that I pity you from my heart, seeing eloquence employed so unworthily, *tantumquam si quisquiliæ vel stercore aureis argenteisque vasis portarentur.*" Farther on he says that "he had treated his arguments with contempt, from a feeling, that if any who read his own books could be moved by such reasoning, they were undeserving of notice; for they were like the sand on the sea-shore, like reeds shaken by the wind, or sieve; and could not be profited by a million books; that they who had imbibed the spirit of his writings would despise such sophistry, while the others would gather no wisdom were God for their sakes to turn all his creatures into tongues. But he had been so strongly urged," he adds, "by his Christian friends to take up the subject, that his conscience began to accuse him of a neglect of duty in refusing their request." — *De Servo Arbitrio*, p. 1—3.

Erasmus published an abusive reply to this work, and the controversy was kept up for some time longer; Zuinglius afterwards engaged in it; and Luther disliked the Swiss reformers almost as much for their opinions respecting free will, as for those which they entertained on the sacrament.

CHAP. VII.

FATE OF CARLOSTAD. — ZUINGLE. — RISE OF THE REFORMATION
IN SWITZERLAND. — PROCEEDINGS AT ZÜRICH. — ABOLITION OF
THE MASS. — LUTHER OPPOSES ZUINGLE. — APOLOGIZES TO
HENRY VIII. — PREPARATIONS FOR THE DIET OF AUGSBURG.

HAD the controversy respecting the Eucharist depended on Carlostad, it would have been already at an end. Surprised by a yielding, though ardent disposition, into enthusiasm, he had been induced to listen with attention to the pretensions of men who possessed neither his learning nor his piety. Rejoiced to call him their partisan, the fanatical visionaries, who so early troubled the reformed church, poured their pretended prophecies into his ears, and, by mingling assurances of the most profound regard for the honour of the Gospel with these assertions of a divine calling and authority, they led him, for a time, almost captive at their will. It is not credible that a man of his character could knowingly engage in any treasonable design, or plot undertakings likely to injure the peace of society, or shake the foundation of wholesome laws. But his influence was dangerous, if not by design, when added to that of such men as Muncer; and Frederic beheld things with too practised an understanding to allow a preacher of this character to remain in an important post. The feelings and exhortations of Luther confirmed him in his determinations; and the unfortunate Carlostad was banished from Wittemberg, as if found guilty of some positive breach of law.*

This proceeding, though prudent, perhaps, on the part of the elector, was not calculated to cure the

* Sleidan. *lib.*

tendency of Carlostad to fanaticism. No longer exposed to the reproofs of Luther, but left at liberty to unite with any of the new sects that now every day arose, — depressed, yet irritated at the treatment he had suffered, — he listened with eagerness to their revelations of that new order of things in which the persecuted especially were to rejoice in dominion and glory. In his exile he continued to write on the points at which he was at issue with Luther, and his style assumed a character corresponding with the state of his mind. He even accused Luther of being a flatterer of the pope, and argued that, by stopping where he did, he favoured the corruptions of the Romish church, the errors of the mass, the worship of images, and whatever else had injured the purity of the simple Gospel. The war of the peasants increased the danger in which Carlostad was placed. It brought him into positions where every word he spoke against Frederic and the other princes might be interpreted in a treasonable sense. His associates were men whose fanaticism had made them desperate, and it was scarcely possible that, ruined as he was, he should resist the temptation of wishing for the success of a revolution which would restore him to wealth and consideration. The defeat of the insurgent peasants, and the consequent humiliation of the sects which almost existed on the hope of their success, reduced Carlostad to a still lower condition of wretchedness; and having little pride in his composition, he wrote to Luther, professing sorrow at the course he had taken, and imploring him to use his best offices with the elector to procure him permission to return to Wittenberg. Luther acceded to the request, and he was allowed to take up his abode in the neighbourhood of the city, but not till he had signed a formal retraction of his opinions, and solemnly protested his innocence with regard to any participation in the war of the peasants.*

* Luther says that he procured his return against the wishes of the whole court. Briele, l. iii. 120.

Thus was a theologian silenced, who had been one of the first to oppose the errors of Rome ; who had ventured to stand up in public debate with its fiercest and most accomplished champion ; and who, on that occasion, received the praise of profound learning, and most correct reasoning. Still further : the doctrines which he continued to advance, were the natural result of principles allowed, at the commencement of the reformation, to be fundamentally true ; and which, in its later progress, were received by most of the reformed churches, as just and evangelical. How was it, then, we naturally ask, that such a fate awaited him ? In the first place, he wanted the personal firmness and vigour of the other controversialists of the time, and yet knew not, like them, to yield at the moment when submission was expedient ; in the next, he was not satisfied with truth, but went on to seek, in his own feelings and those of others, that enlargement of revelation and its evidence, which has, in all ages, been the peculiar desire of enthusiasm. Lastly, Luther exerted his power against him with a severity and perseverance which would have ruined a man of much firmer spirit. The great reformer was in this instance a persecutor, and passed the bounds within which a becoming sense of his own situation, and of the principles of religious liberty on which his own safety depended, would certainly have restrained him. We notice this, because it affords a useful lesson to those who engage in the work of reform, and who are most zealous for the rights of conscience, and the great interests of truth, as depending on freedom of inquiry. Never did a man owe more to the assertion of these principles than Luther, and yet he was one of the first to violate them. Nor can it be said, that the illegality of Carlostad's proceedings justified his severity ; for he wrote with fierceness against him long before either his opinions or actions could be fairly considered unwarranted by the Gospel. He might greatly differ from his views as to church discipline, ceremonies, and other points ; and,

taking into view the expediency of seeking reform by slow degrees and with great caution, he might discover in Carlostad's attempts somewhat of unwise precipitancy; but this could not warrant the rancour which led him to speak of his character, of his mind and conduct, as if he had been suddenly converted from a scholar and a man of Christian principles, into an ignorant fanatic.

It had been Carlostad's chief desire to establish right notions concerning the sacrament of the communion. On this subject he continued to write till just before his return to Wittenberg. It was then in the hands of the Swiss reformer, Zuinglius, whose struggles in the cause of the Gospel are only less deserving of admiration as they were less universal in their tendency than those of Luther. This excellent man was born on the first day of the year 1484, in the village of Wildhaus, on the lake of Zurich. Having received the early part of his education in the house of his uncle, an ecclesiastic, he was sent to Basle, where his progress so outstripped that of the other scholars, that he became an object of envy and dislike, as well as wonder. His father then removed him to Berne, at that time celebrated for its excellent school of philosophy and general literature. His diligence was unabated, and the fame of his abilities early attracted the notice of the religious orders. Among these the Dominicans employed their influence to draw him into their ranks; but his family was averse to his assuming their habit, and sent him to pursue his studies in Germany. Thence he returned to Basle, and entered the theological seminary, early established there by the learned Thomas Wittenbach, formerly professor of divinity at Tubingen.*

Zuingle remained at Basle till he took the degree of master of arts; and soon after—that is, in the year 1506—was admitted to the order of priesthood. His piety and eminent abilities procured him an appointment as minister of the village of Glaris, and there he continued

* Ruchat, *Hist. de la Réform. de la Suisse*, t. i. p. 5.

ten years, exercising the office of a pastor with affectionate assiduity and ardour. During this period he further devoted himself to the acquisition of that extensive theological erudition, which was to fit him for the important task of asserting the authority of the Gospel against the corruptions with which its purity had been so grossly violated. In the course of his studies, he not only examined with critical attention the epistles of St. Paul in the original Greek, but transcribed them with his own hand ; and while engaged in this exercise, made a selection from the writings of the most eminent fathers of such passages as illustrated the apostle's style. Nor did he neglect those studies in which he had spent his earlier years. It was his desire to perform all the parts of his sacred office in a manner which might prove his zeal for God, and the interest he felt in persuading men to turn from darkness to light.

The moral and religious condition of Switzerland, at this period, presented a melancholy aspect to devout minds. Possessing no other species of wealth but that which consisted in the bravery and hardy constitution of its people, the tribute which it had to pay to more powerful nations, and the materials with which it trafficked, were the persons and lives of its bold peasantry. Always ready to be hired, they formed the basis of most of the armaments led into the field ; and to none of the potentates who employed them were their services more necessary, or acceptable, than to the Roman pontiff. Few arts were left unemployed to awaken their enthusiasm when the head of the church required their aid either for himself or his allies. The promises of Mohammed scarcely exceeded those with which these mountaineers were persuaded to hazard their lives in the service of Rome.

National manners must always suffer more or less from war, under whatever plea it be carried on. The fire of patriotism, lit up in the field of battle, may burn purely in some few spirits, but is to the mass only a

deceptive meteor, which, quickly blazing out, leaves them in almost complete darkness. Hence the dissoluteness of the military character in early times, and the necessity acknowledged in a more advanced age, of the most rigid and watchful discipline. But if this be the case, where there is some show of patriotic devotion to lessen the barbarity of war, what must be the danger of a people whose business is habitually in the field of carnage, and who have no better apology for war than that it is a means of gain? For the most part, this was the case with the Swiss for several ages; the only exceptions were those in which they took up arms at the call of the pope, when, perhaps, a momentary feeling of religious duty might occupy the place of their ordinary apology,—the necessity of their condition, the expediency of their enriching themselves through the sanguinary ambition of princes.

Zuinge beheld with heartfelt sorrow the evils which were brought upon his country by this system. He saw that the great body of the population were demoralised, rude in manners, and ignorant of the true principles and doctrines of religion. To oppose their corruptions, while so fruitful a source of mischief remained open, appeared a hopeless undertaking. With the wisdom of a Christian philosopher, therefore, he resolved to try his strength in resisting the continuance of a custom so fraught with ruin. The undertaking was one of difficulty and peril. Mercenary warfare had been established as a legitimate employment by long usage, and it was a known means of wealth to some, and of easy support to thousands. But Zuinge was resolved on the attempt; and he accordingly began by addressing his countrymen on the subject, in a letter directed to the canton of Schwytz. After proving to them, that the persuasions of those by whom they were induced to leave their country, had no foundation in truth, he added, “I know that the anger of the great and the powerful will be excited at what I have said. But I will not remain silent. I have condemned your

alliance with the pope, and your agreement to furnish him with troops, because I ought to condemn it. You strip yourselves of your forces, and thereby run the hazard of becoming a prey to your enemies, who, having through your means obtained the object of their avarice and ambition, will next turn against their allies, and reduce you to slavery."

It was thus that Zuingle began the work of reform. His proceedings lead us forcibly to observe how universal a cause of discontent to men of piety and good sense was the policy of the popes. In every way in which it could operate, it tended to the corruption of morals. Had they not been blinded by the love of dominion, they would have seen that such a state of things must sooner or later produce a revolution, in which the foundations of the church would be shaken, and the whole edifice, perhaps, overthrown. Luther would have remained silent, if they had only restrained the profligacy of their ministers. Zuingle would have pursued in peace the simple duties of a Christian preacher, if they had not supported a system which darkened and demoralised his country.

The force of the argument brought against the system which had deprived Switzerland of so many of its children, and diffused so much corruption among the rest, was acknowledged by all not immediately interested in the continuance of the evil. Zuingle, consequently, rose greatly in the esteem of the better part of his countrymen; and, in spite of the jealousy which his notions of reform inspired, was, not long after the publication of the above letter, promoted to the abbey church of the celebrated monastery called the Hermitage. Here he met with a man, in the person of the abbot, whose mind, like his own, seems to have been earnestly bent on the consideration of evangelical truth. Here too he found an audience sufficiently mixed and numerous to secure the general diffusion of his opinions; and as he continued to study and unfold the principles which he gathered from the Gospel, his addresses be-

came more earnest, and more manifestly opposed to those with which the people had been entertained by their former teachers.*

It was not, we learn, by a direct exposure of the errors of the Roman church, that Zuingli sought to effect his purpose. He hoped to deliver his hearers from the darkness under which they laboured, by at once pointing out to them the sources of light and truth. Whether he adopted this method from any feeling of timidity, natural to the generality of minds at the commencement of a great undertaking, or from a clear conviction that he might thereby more securely perfect his design, is not certain. But while he every day obtained a stronger hold of the affections of the people, he also continued to advance as to his personal interests. He had been scarcely three years at the Hermitage, when he was appointed to a church in Zurich; shortly after to a canonship in the chapter of St. Felix and St. Regulus in that city; and then to the collegiate church, where he had to perform the duties not only of a pastor, but of a professor and teacher of theology.

Zuingli was now in a position which, while it enabled him to advance his opinions with greater confidence, exposed him also to the stricter observation of his enemies. But though to him belongs the praise of having been the first openly to appeal to the pages of the Gospel, as the sole authority for the faith of Christians, he was not without many friends and supporters in the work which he had undertaken to execute. We have already alluded to the pious abbot of the Hermitage. It is also said that his former master, Thomas Wittenbach, had long given up the study of scholastic, for that of evangelical, theology. "Our repentance," says Zuingli, in a letter to that venerable scholar, "at the recollection of the time which we have wasted in useless subtleties, will serve for an example to others, and may induce those who have free and elevated minds not to amuse themselves

* Ruchat, t. i. l. i. p. 9.

with things which we so rejoice to have quitted, but with sorrow that we have not been able to do more." When, however, it was told the bishop of Constance that he opposed the preaching of indulgences at Zurich, the prelate replied, that he trusted he would remain firm to his purpose. These circumstances indicate a disposition to allow much greater freedom in respect to religion, in Switzerland, than was tolerated in the other countries of Europe; and Zuingle, consequently, possessed advantages which were highly important to the reformer at the commencement of his career.

But, notwithstanding the indulgence with which he was received by some, and those even influential, members of the church, in the early part of his ministry, a few years only had elapsed when he began to suffer most of the anxieties which pertain to a situation of great peril. The clergy, as a body, hated him for disturbing that state of things from which they derived their revenue; and the mass of the people were unable sufficiently to appreciate the value of his labours to afford him any sure protection. In such danger did he stand at one time, that the magistrates were obliged to provide him with a guard, and he repeatedly owed his life solely to the affection and vigilance of his immediate followers. Under all these circumstances, the local government acted with an enlightened zeal and moderation which merits the reverence of posterity. Finding also, as he continued to preach, that truth was on his side, they took up his cause, and at length passed a decree which amounted to a solemn recognition of the most important principle of the Reformation. "We own not," said they, in their apology to the other cantons, "the doctrines of Luther, in directing the curates and other ministers of our city and territory to preach from the Gospel and the Epistles, and to adopt in their instructions those interpretations only which Scripture furnishes of Scripture. The canon law is not contrary to this ordinance; we have also enjoined them to preach nothing which may not be

defended by Scripture, and to avoid whatever savours of novelty."

For some time Zuingle reaped no small advantage from these favourable concessions to his cause: but the magistrates of a free town, like Zurich, have only a limited authority, and one which must often yield to popular clamour, whether it be for the establishment of still more liberal principles, or for errors of policy in which their wiser chiefs foresee the noblest interests of mankind sacrificed to folly and bigotry. Opposed from the beginning to Zuingle, the greater number of the clergy now united in active measures to procure his ruin, not only by popular clamour, but by rousing against him and his supporters the power of the other cantons. The reformer beheld the rising of the storm with calmness. He neither shrunk from the danger, nor trembled at the task of having to defend his doctrine against zealots and persecutors. At his earnest request, the magistrates consented to summon an assembly for the purpose of considering the accusations with which he was assailed. To this meeting the bishop of Constance sent his grand vicar, John Faber, and other official persons. It was expected that representatives would have appeared from the other cantons, but the concourse of people assembled consisted chiefly of private individuals, interested in the debate from its theological importance.*

Zuingle, on rising, observed, that he had published a full account of his doctrine in sixty-seven propositions, the printed copies of which were now dispersed through the country, and that, as he had been accused of heresy, he was there prepared to defend his principles by appeals to Scripture. Faber replied, that he came not to dispute, but to reconcile; and wished to refer the weightier matter to a council. The reformer, on hearing this, observed, with some warmth, that, as he had been exposed to accusations of the worst nature, it was but just that he should be allowed to confound those who brought

* Ruchat.

them ; and that he, therefore, begged his adversaries to state, at once, and before that assembly, in what they believed him to have erred. He besought them to do this, by all that is sacred ; and added, that it was a mockery to speak of councils, for it was well known that none would be held ; and that, with regard to the fitness of the present meeting to try his cause, nothing was needed but that which it already possessed : " For Lehold," exclaimed he, " there are the Old and New Testaments, in the three languages, Greek, Hebrew, and Latin : they are the only infallible judges. Let us open these books, and decide on their authority the questions between us."

Strong as was this appeal, it was succeeded only by deep silence. Neither Faber nor the other members of the accusing party made the slightest attempt to free themselves from the difficulty in which the direct reference to Scripture had involved them. Zuingle, having waited some time, again arose, and boldly accused them of want of courage and honesty. This address was followed by one from a minister of Zurich, who stated that a clergyman in the country had lately been thrown into prison, by the bishop of Constance, for having preached the reformed doctrines. Faber could not avoid making some observation on this circumstance ; and in his attempt to defend the bishop, who had ceased to countenance any idea of reform, he unwisely let fall a remark on the worship of saints and images. Zuingle was too keen a polemic to allow him to escape after this ; and having driven him through all the windings of the scholastic labyrinth, obliged him to sound a retreat, and excuse himself by the ridiculous subterfuge of asserting that he would confute him in a university, or in a book, and that it would be well, for the present, to pass over the Gospel.*

The magistrates of Zurich had found themselves obliged to yield to the prejudices and power of the Romish party, and summon Zuingle to the bar of their

* Ruchat.

assembly. Their dependence on popular opinion, and allegiance to the federal union of which their state was a member, might have led them to further measures, had the justice of his cause been less manifest, or the vigour and real power of his enemies more decided. But they had throughout displayed a willingness to be guided by the truth; and now that they saw clearly that Zuingle had the authority of God's word for what he said, and his adversaries only sophistry and tradition for their boldest propositions, they no longer hesitated between the two, but once more declared that the clergy of their city and territory must be guided in their preaching by Scripture only.

This meeting, which took place in the year 1523, was followed by another in the same year, convened at the express desire of the consul, a man of eminent piety, formerly regarded by the Roman pontiff with the highest esteem, and who might have commanded both wealth and honour, if he would now have employed his interest against, instead of for, the Reformation. The avowed object of this second assembly was to consider the propriety of forbidding the worship of images, and the rites which converted the sacrament of the Lord's Supper into a sacrifice.

It is a striking proof of the important influence which Zuingle must have personally exercised, that none of the other cantons had as yet begun to take a public share in the work of reformation. They wanted the guiding hand and spirit, to which the Almighty gave strength as his instrument. Nine hundred persons crowded the place of assembly on this occasion; but there were no deputies present except from Schaffhausen and St. Gal; nor had any of the bishops sent their vicars or other representatives to the meeting.*

Zuingle began the business of the day by unfolding the true meaning of the word Church, and showing the proper grounds of its authority. His arguments were received with silence; nor would any attempt have been

* Sleidan, t. i. l. iv. p. 135. Ruchat, t. i. l. ii. p. 162.

made to rebut them, had not the magistrates pressed the opposing party so urgently, that shame, at length, obliged one of the canons to rise and make an effort to reply. His speech had little to do with the subject in debate; and Leon de Juda, who had succeeded Zuingle at the Hermitage, expressed his desire that the argument might be confined to the two questions which they had met to resolve. This advice was taken, and that and the two following days the discussion was carried on with equal spirit and resolution. The magistrates decided in favour of the reformer's views on the subject both of images and the Lord's Supper. In respect to the latter, they would have passed an order for the immediate discontinuance of the practices with which the sacrament had been corrupted, but Zuingle pursuing, in this respect, the same plans as Luther, begged them to pause, and only institute such gradual reforms as the state of the people would allow them to bear. He was moved, it is said, even to tears as he delivered this address, and spoke of the difficulties and troubles which he foresaw must still come upon him.

In the January of 1524, an assembly of all the cantons was convened at Lucerne. The object of this meeting was to counteract the effect of that in the reformed territory of Zurich; and at the conclusion of its deliberations, an instrument was drawn up, in which the assembled authorities decreed, that the established doctrine and practices of the church ought not to be changed; that no opinion professed by Zuingle, and contrary to this rule, might be taught either publicly or privately; that neither he nor his doctrine ought to be made the subject of common discourse; that the ministers of the church should not be obliged to give an account of their doctrine to magistrates; but that they should carry before them any one found guilty of violating this decree, and that, for the purpose of discovering such offenders, persons should be appointed to take especial cognizance of those whose conduct appeared suspicious. The only canton which had not sent its representatives to this meeting, was that of Zurich. It

was, therefore, ordered that deputies should proceed thither, and convey the wishes of the assembly, that it would forthwith return to the ancient mode of worship, and take such other measures as might tend to the preservation of union and tranquillity. To this exhortation the magistrates of Zurich replied, that they had not originally favoured the reformed doctrines, but were now led to support them by the plain dictates of Scripture and their conscience: that the union of the church was best promoted by keeping its doctrines pure from any mixture of error; that they deserved not the name of schismatics, since they appealed to the authority of Scripture for every step they took, and considered it their peculiar characteristic to have the word of God continually in their hands; that it was this which excited the anger of the pope and his adherents, who felt that their principles and conduct would not bear the light of divine truth: that, in regard to themselves, it was their sole desire to see the Gospel preached freely and clearly to the people, whose moral conduct was improving in exact proportion to the increase of evangelical knowledge; and that, if the other cantons would only candidly consider this account of their proceedings, and the authority on which they were established, they would never find any reason to accuse them of want of loyalty and brotherly affection to the federal union.

Two months was the period assigned for the rest of the cantons to consider the purport of this answer. In the interval, the bishop of Constance exerted himself to bring Zurich back to its ecclesiastical allegiance; but his addresses produced no effect on the steady and well disciplined minds of the consul and his brother magistrates. At the end of the two months, the cantons having refrained from sending a reply to the above appeal, orders were given out for the removal of the images from the churches, and for such other reforms as seemed authorised by Scripture and the state of public feeling.

The Reformation had thus proceeded to considerable

lengths in Switzerland by the time that Luther could rejoice in the prospect of its establishment in Germany. At the very period, moreover, when he triumphed over Carlostad, by obliging him to renounce his views of the Lord's Supper, Zuingli saw with pious joy that his fellow citizens were sufficiently advanced in the knowledge of the Gospel to receive the doctrine of the communion according to its most spiritual interpretation. In the month of April, 1525, the adoration of the host, with all its attendant ceremonies, was abolished at Zurich by a decree of the senate; and the day after the passing of this act, the communion was administered in the simple form authorised by Scripture and the usages of the primitive church. Thus, the sermon being finished, the bread and wine were set upon a table, and the ministers having approached, those passages of Scripture were read which describe the origin of the rite, and teach the preparation necessary to its proper reception. The creed was then repeated, and the pastor of the church exhorted the congregation to examine themselves; after which, the people falling on their knees, the Gospel was read, and he proceeded to give the bread and the wine to the deacons assisting him. By these officers they were presented to the congregation; each member of which, after partaking thereof himself, passed them to his brethren.*

Luther had now two great controversies in hand, as well as that which he had so long carried on with Rome,

* In a letter addressed by Zuinglius to his brethren, at the end of the year 1524, he reminds them that he had for some years past entertained this view of the bread and wine in the Lord's Supper, but that he had only communicated it in this manner to such as he knew to be very sound in faith. He directs that his example should be followed in this respect: — "Ne scilicet nunquam communicatis, qui non sit sincerus in fide; sed nec ei quidem, nisi tutum sit quod exendi non faciat." He then alludes to the difference of opinion between him and his associate on the force of the connecting verb *is*, and also to the opinions of the German reformers respecting the mass: "Quæ de cautionibus Germanicis ac psalmis scribitis fratribus omnibus placeant. Quæ vero de missa, non undeque probantur. Nam hoc sacramentum aliud non est, quam electis gratulatio et consideratio. Cum igitur toti ecclesie ipsam celebrare placebit, celebretur; ac interim detur opera, ut quod paulo inconsultius institutum est, majore consensu ecclesie approbetur." — *Epist. Lat. t. p. 16.* — *Beausobre.*

and which was become the controversy of princes and nations, with their whole vast retinues of theologians, churches, and colleges. Zuinglius, Ecclampadius, Myconius, and Leon de Juda, were not men whose opinions or influence could be regarded with indifference ; and by all these was the practice of Luther, in respect to the communion, openly and decidedly condemned. Those who had the interest of the Reformation deeply at heart, beheld the prospect of a schism between the labourers in this great design with equal sorrow and apprehension. They saw how fearful an advantage their enemies would gain by such an occurrence, and how many weak, though well inclined spirits, might be prevented from embracing the truth, when its rays were obscured by the disputes of its supposed advocates. Led by these apprehensions, the theologians of Strasbourg deputed their professor of Hebrew to converse with Luther on the subject, and urged him to employ the most earnest persuasions to induce the reformer to cultivate friendship with the Swiss, and their eminently learned and pious teachers. It is scarcely credible that Luther should have replied as is reported. Instead of acknowledging the value of the suggestions adduced by the Hebrew professor, he sternly replied, that no agreement could exist between him and the party of Zuingle ; for that the doctrine in question was so important, that the one or the other of them must necessarily be ministers of Satan. The warmest admirers of Luther can scarcely fail of perceiving that such an assertion was neither justified by Scripture, nor consistent with the personal experience of the reformer himself. There was a long period of his life during which his opinions were in the progress of formation ; it must be so in the case of all men anxious to know and embrace the truth ; and the records of their experience will amply show that the views for which they at one time warmly contended, were not those on which they rested when full of years and mature in knowledge. But who sees not that it would have been the height of injustice to charge them, at any

period, with an offence against truth ; and that, though their notions have undergone many modifications, they were, from the beginning of the search, deserving of regard and honour? Now, whichever had truth on his side in the sacramental controversy, the other was but to be viewed as a man who traced out his path with slower steps ; and certainly not as one who turned his back upon the light, or declared for Satan, or even unconsciously promoted his designs, because a variety of arguments did not present themselves to his mind in the same order, or end in the same generalisation, as those of another.

While Luther was thus engaged in controversy with Erasmus, Zuingli, and others, he endeavoured to remove the prejudices which he had excited against his cause in the minds of the king of England and George of Saxony.* In his letter to the former, he begs him to pardon his intemperance of language, and to ascribe it not so much to himself, as to those by whom he was advised. He even declares his willingness to offer a public apology for the offensive terms which he had employed ; and entreats the monarch not to regard him as a heretic, seeing that the whole of his doctrines rested on this, — that we can only be saved by faith in Jesus Christ, who, having died for our sins, and risen again for our justification, now reigns eternally with his Father in heaven. In conclusion, he spoke of the number of princes in Germany who had embraced his opinions, and besought the king to join them in the defence of the Gospel. The opposition of the emperor he ascribed to the influence of that great principle of evil spoken of by David, — “The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the Lord, and against his anointed ;” and he adds, that the more he contemplated such passages as these, the more he was surprised to find himself aided by any earthly potentate whatever.

* “ I know,” says he, “ that your majesty must have been greatly offended at my book ; quem (non meo genio, sed incitantibus his, qui magistati tue damna favebant) stultus et princeps edidi. Tamen spero et ausum

But Henry VIII. could not be moved by the address of one who, having lavishly abused and ridiculed him, now sought to lead him in the train of other and less powerful princes. His answer was such as might have been expected,—severe and haughty, and expressive of inflexible aversion to Luther and his proceedings. The latter, on the point of addressing George of Saxony, in a similar spirit of humiliation, suspended for a moment his determination. On resuming his pen, he cautiously introduced an expression of sufficient confidence to convince the prince that, though willing to humble himself to promote peace, he still remained firmly seated on that lofty eminence, from which he had made his voice heard by millions of his fellow men, and obliged popes and monarchs to tremble as he poured forth his maledictions on falsehood and oppression. After apologising for the intemperance of his former language, and assuring the prince of his ready forgetfulness of the attempts made against his life, he says, “However powerful you may be, you are not more terrible than Satan; and him I have resisted without shrinking. I know that the doctrine which I preach is true; and the truth of a doctrine remains the same, whatever be the condition of him who delivers it. How great a misfortune is it, that a prince, otherwise prudent and enlightened, should thus

mibi facit, non modo regia illa tua elementia, sic mihi literis et verbis indies cantata (a quam plurimis, ut cum mortalem sese, noverit immortales) inimicitias servaturam esse non credam, verum etiam (quod fide dignis testibus didici), libellum sub majestatis tue nomine in me editum, non esse regis Angliæ (ut videri volebant subdoli sophistæ, qui majestatis tue titulo abusi, non senserunt, quam sibi ipsis periculum in regia ignominia pararent, præsertim illud monstrum et publicum odium Dei et hominum, cardinalis Eboracensis, pestis illa regni tui), ita ut vehementer nunc pudet actus metuant oculos coram majestate tua levare, qui passus sum levitate ista me moveri in talem tantumque regem per indignos illos operarios, præsertim cum sine face et vermis quam solo contentu oportuit victum aut neglectum esse.” Then imploring pardon, by the love of Christ, by his cross and his glory, he continues,—“Deinde si majestate tuæ serenissime non videretur contemnendum, ut alio libello publico palinodiam eantem, et nomen majestatis tuæ rursus honorem, det mihi elementem aliquam, significationem; tum in me mora non erit ulli, faciam illud libentissime. Quamvis enim sine homo nihili, ad tuam majestatem comparatus, tamen non parum fructus Evangelio et gloriæ Dei hinc sperare habebit, si mihi ad regem Angliæ scribendi de causa Evangelii fuerit copia facta.”—*Bruse, t. iii. 21. edit. de Wette*

fall upon this stone of stumbling. If you persevere in hating the Gospel, I shall be compelled to pray against you; and think not that it will be in vain. Luther is not to be destroyed so easily as Muncer. I am persuaded that my prayers are stronger than all the powers of hell. If it were not so, I must have perished long since."

The enemies of Luther availed themselves of expressions in these letters to king Henry and the duke, to accuse him of vacillation, and of holding out offers to retract the opinions which he had done so much mischief to establish. Emser, one of his bitterest opponents, lost no time in translating and publishing the letter of the English monarch, as the best means of exposing the reformer to public contempt. Luther, some time after, wrote a reply to Emser's introduction, and indignantly repelled the charge of want of steadiness in his profession. He had, he said, only yielded to the great and powerful that which it seemed expedient to give; and had never offered to retract, except on the condition that he was confuted by the testimony of scripture.*

Such was the troubled state of Germany at this period, A. D. 1526. that the emperor had seen fit to direct that the diet, originally convened at Spire, should re-assemble at Augsburg, and not till the autumn of the following year. The war of the peasants still continuing, the number of members assembled at Augsburg was so small, that the business for which it met was again referred to another assembly of the states, appointed to meet in the spring, and in the town of Spire. Never had the diet assembled under circumstances of greater interest; and its opening, which took

* Luther thus speaks on the rejection of his overtures:—"Anglorum rex (cui scripsi suasu regis Danie supplices et humiles literas, spe bona certe et simplici candidoque corde) respondit mihi tam hostiliter, ut videretur gaudere vindictæ occasione, sicut et dux Georgius. Tam impotens et muliebris est istis tyrannis animus ac plane sordidus, dignus qui vulgo serviret, sed Christo gratia, et mihi lætitia, sat vindicatus sum, quod contentus est mihi Deus eorum Satan cum ipsis." It is not a little curious to hear this mighty and stern-minded polemic speak in the next line about some garden seeds which his friend had promised to send him, and afterwards informing him that he and Wolfgang amused themselves with learning the art of turning.—*Briefe*, t. iii. 58. edit. de Wette.

place on the 25th of June, was watched with intense anxiety, as well by one party as the other.*

The edict by which Charles originally summoned the meeting at Augsburg had created universal alarm in the minds of the reformers. It breathed a spirit of fierce hostility to their party, insisted on the necessity of carrying into execution the regulations established at Worms, and spoke of Lutheranism as of a heresy which merited the deepest reprobation of both princes and people. The ordinary policy of the emperor would account for much of what appears in this charge. But the Roman pontiff had of late employed his utmost efforts to convince the monarch that his interests would be best promoted by an entire devotion to those of the church. Every prince almost in Europe had been assailed by similar arguments; and the Roman court seemed resolved to make, on this occasion, one wide and desperate effort before it parted for ever with its old prerogatives and splendour. To counteract the influence of this activity in the popish party, the elector of Saxony, the landgrave, and other supporters of Lutheranism, held frequent consultations respecting the line of conduct to be pursued in the diet. At the advice of the two princes above mentioned, a union was formed among the members of the reformed church. Though far inferior in number and apparent power to the body which it had to oppose, the league possessed a degree of vigour and inherent strength which amply made up for its deficiency in nominal dignity or numerical force. The principal members of the association were the imperial cities, Nuremberg, Augsburg, Ulm, Strasburg, Magdeburg, and others of less note; the elector palatine and the elector of Treves; the dukes of Mecklenburg, Luneburg, and Pomerania; the princes of Anhalt and Henneberg; and the margraves of Brandenburg of the Franconian branch; together with a large proportion of the nobility.†

After careful consideration of the approaching danger,

* Sleidan,

... † Seckendorf, lib. ii. c. c. ix. p. 42

the members of the league determined that their representatives in the diet should openly remonstrate with the emperor on the subject of his late edict ; that they should warn him of the impossibility of compelling the inhabitants of a great country to renounce the truth when once received ; and entreat him to view the whole subject of religious reform as one which regarded the glory of God, and the highest interests of mankind at large. The elector of Saxony had also taken the further precaution to employ the pen of Melancthon in preparing an apology for the reformed doctrines. Argumentative and eloquent, this interesting production sets forth the true state of the controversy at the period of which we are speaking. Though seemingly the composition of Melancthon alone, it was published as the address of the theologians of Wittenberg, engaged as a body in the defence of the reformation. The weightiest reproach which the Romish party could bring against the followers of Luther was, that they had unlawfully resisted the constituted powers of the church, and committed a species of sacrilege in allowing changes not authorised by their consent. It was also urged, in the same spirit, that even the princes who had suffered a new doctrine to be preached in their states, against the express decree of the emperor, were properly subject to severe reprehension. In answer to these assertions, the divines of Wittenberg contended, that ministers of religion lie under an obligation, which has force before all others, to preach the truth ; and that the princes who were accused of schism could not, without extreme injustice, have persecuted doctrines which they either knew to be true, or could not positively affirm to be false.

It was found, on the opening of the diet, that the strongest measures had been taken by the emperor to secure the defeat of the Lutherans. His commissioners declared, that the chief object for which he had summoned the diet was to establish the ancient customs and rites of the church, and to call upon the various orders

of the Germanic body to join in repressing heresy, and put in execution the edict of Worms. Certain members of the diet were then chosen to confer particularly on matters of religion, and the assembly prorogued its sitting to the 3d of August.

On the re-assembling of the diet, the ministers of the emperor warned its members against entering into a useless debate on subjects respecting which they might have no authority to form a decision. This admonition they strengthened by reading the letters in which Charles had expressed his intentions to make a journey into Italy, and to hold a conference with the pope on the subject of a general council; to which were added his commands, that, till such council was held, strict obedience should be paid to the ancient laws and customs of the church, as set forth in the edict of Worms.

But the spirit of the nation had greatly altered since the time when an imperial rescript could change the determination of men's hearts and consciences. The letters of the emperor having been delivered, the deputies of the cities immediately rose, and read the customary official document, which purported, that whatever might be their wish to obey the will of his majesty, religious disputes were now at so great a height that there was no longer room for delay; that, after what had occurred, it was impossible to enforce the provisions of the edict of Worms, as they believed he himself would allow, were he present to observe the state of affairs; that the holding of a general council was now less probable than ever, the pope and the emperor having lately adopted hostile counsels; and that, consequently, it would be prudent, in the present juncture of affairs, to entreat the latter to take immediate measures for the settlement of the disputes, and not to insist on obedience to the edict of Worms — an attempt to enforce which could only be attended with consequences destructive to the peace and unity of the empire. The same deputies also read another paper, in which the cities complain that their poor suffered many deprivations and hardships through the

concourse of mendicant friars, who not only exhausted the ordinary sources of charity, but imposed on the wealthy so as to injure many families, and deprive the rightful heirs of their just expectations. In consequence of these abuses, they prayed that a decree might be passed prohibiting the continuance of the order, or making such provisions as would lead to its gradual abolition.*

It required little penetration on the part of the Romanists, to discover that, if the discussions were allowed to proceed, conclusions would be adopted which could not but greatly injure their cause. They therefore again insisted that the affairs of religion should be referred to the inquiry of a general council; and that the members of the diet ought to wait patiently for the time when, a reconciliation being effected between the pope and the emperor, such an assembly could be successfully convened. This proposition was received with very opposite feelings by the two parties in the diet; and, it being suspected that the claims of the reformers would meet with no attention, the elector of Saxony and his firm ally, the landgrave of Hesse, prepared to leave the assembly, and summoned the rest of the Lutherans to follow their example. The archduke of Austria, Ferdinand, to whom the emperor had committed the conduct of affairs in Germany, dreaded the consequence of allowing these powerful princes to retire in disgust and anger. Having consulted, therefore, with the heads of his party, it was decided, that promises should be held out which might tend for the present to satisfy public impatience. The elector and his associates were accordingly assured, that immediate steps should be taken to secure the calling either of a general council, or of such an assembly of the Germanic states as would have authority to settle the present disputes. To the deputies of the various cities Ferdinand addressed himself in a tone of earnest persuasion, begging them to recollect

* Sleidan, l. i. l. vi. p. 271. Seckendorf.

how much they owed to the house of Austria, and to consider the benefits which would result from their yielding faithful obedience to the present will of the emperor. But events were daily occurring, which reminded both the members of the diet and the nation at large of the necessity of union far more forcibly than the address of Ferdinand. It was at the point of closing the session, when news arrived of the victorious advance of the Turks through Hungary, and of the death of the king in his retreat. Alarm spread swiftly through the country when this event became known. The Turks, at the present period, formed an object of terror to the greatest of European potentates. Civilisation trembled at the report of their triumphs, and churches and thrones seemed to demand more than ever the protecting barriers of faith and loyalty. Divine providence had doubtlessly connected these events with the progress of its own mighty and benevolent designs.

While the minds of the German reformers were thus occupied, affairs in Switzerland presented an almost equally unsettled and ominous aspect. Exerting all their ability and energy to keep the reformation from spreading beyond Zurich, the catholic party succeeded in persuading twelve of the cantons to summon a meeting at Bade. As the purpose of this assembly was a controversial discussion, the most distinguished of the Romanist theologians — Eckius and Faber — appeared there, armed with all the weapons which could be bestowed by an extensive acquaintance with the subject, and long experience in the arts of debate. Zuingle excused himself from attending this meeting; but Oecolampadius took up the defence of the reformed doctrines, and the dispute was carried on by both parties with vigour and ingenuity.

Another melancholy proof is here afforded of the fallacy with which republican institutions are supported. Zuingle was treated with as much tyrannous injustice by the twelve cantons arrayed against him, as he could have been by a corrupt court and bigoted monarch. He

had expressed his willingness to defend the reformed doctrines at any time, and in any place, provided his adversaries would agree to certain necessary preliminaries, and assure him of personal safety. These conditions were asked for in vain; but when he refused to proceed to Bade, he was accused of cowardice, and want of knowledge or ability to defend his opinions. His answer to this accusation proves the injustice with which he had been treated. The safe-conduct sent him was signed by only seven out of the twelve cantons; the rest being such enemies to his doctrines, that he could not, without the greatest personal risk, trust himself in their hands. It had been affirmed that hostages were offered for his safety; but this was not the case; the only security proffered being this, — that he should be conducted to the meeting, and back, by men of Bade, which, he said, would only be to resign him to those who wished for his destruction. The enmity of Eckius and Faber was the origin of this attempt to ruin him: they were the instruments of the hostile cantons; and Zuingle considered that the design to make him their victim was fully proved, by their choosing a place for the meeting approved of neither by himself nor the magistrates of Zurich. Surprising as it is that such injustice could be exercised towards Zuingle personally, it is still more astonishing to find, that his opponents even meditated calling in the assistance of the emperor, as well as that of the pope, to crush him and the cantons which supported his cause. His remonstrances, when this plot was discovered, show that he trembled not only for his own sake, but, as a patriot, for that of his country. “What,” he said, “shall we again yield to a yoke, and voluntarily restore the servitude, under which we so long groaned, and which to break from cost us so much blood?”*

Notwithstanding the increased vigilance, and the more determined proceedings, of its opponents, the Reformation was every day evincing the irresistible might

* Ruchat, t. i. liv. iii. Sleidan

of sound and enlightened principles. At the diet of Spire, the multitudes assembled there, and who had been accustomed to witness on such occasions the most riotous displays, beheld with wonder the sedate and pious behaviour of those who bore the name of Lutherans. The territory of Prussia, which, under the old system, had been a prey to the licentious nobility, now began to wear the appearance of a well-governed and Christian state. Wherever, in short, the reformed doctrines obtained, there piety and good order were established. The prince became reasonable and just ; formed correct notions of the duties which pertained both to himself and his subjects ; and, no longer determined to support the old maxims of arbitrary rule, feared not to let the light flow around his throne, or cast its beams upon his crown, or into his heart. Among the people, on the other hand, a sense of dignity, a rational love of freedom, intense desires for knowledge, deep feelings of Christian responsibility, produced the most happy changes. Their views and hopes enlarged, they gradually ceased to relish the childish and licentious amusements which formerly delighted them. They were led to the performance of duty by conviction and reverence ; and obedience, therefore, daily became more uniform. The results of these changes were still to be looked for in the enlarged means of human happiness, the greater stability of governments, the more uniform and consistent blending together of the different orders of society. And in proportion as the principles of the reformation continued to prevail, these were the permanent effects of its establishment. Age after age has reaped a harvest of blessings from its introduction. To it we owe, at the present day, whatever is most valuable in our institutions, most respectable in our habits and customs, most useful in our literature, most stable and animating in our prospects as Christians. Had the spirit of the reformation been followed with firmer steps, we should have been enjoying still higher degrees of good : but the full development of its principles is still

to be looked for. The springs of its energy are neither broken, nor quite uncoiled. We shall again feel the mighty force with which, unbending themselves, they shook the strong holds of corruption, pride, folly, and superstition. And if nations, and the various orders of society, can be persuaded to believe that truth, and the divine blessing, are better securities for happiness than the darkness of selfish wisdom, the Christian church will be truly God's kingdom upon earth.

CHAP. VIII.

CEREMONIES AND DISCIPLINE REFORMED. — POLITICAL EVENTS.
— TROUBLES OF LUTHER. — CONTROVERSY WITH ZUINGLE.
— PROGRESS OF THE REFORMATION IN SWITZERLAND. —
TREATY OF BRESLAU. — REFORMS AT STRASBURG. — IN-
STRUCTIONS TO THE PASTORS. — DIET OF SPIRE. — ITS CON-
SEQUENCES.

LUTHER's authority, as the head of the reformed church, was now so well established, that he introduced what improvements seemed necessary without fear of opposition. His first care was to provide for the general instruction of the people. In the Roman church they had been taught as if they possessed only a species of animal sensibility. A process was pursued, by which this capability of receiving impressions from without might be gradually increased, till it exhibited all the signs of intense passion and enthusiasm. But it was not thus that reasoning beings could be led to understand, or properly believe, the Gospel. The very faculties by which such an object is to be sought, were lulled to sleep: no incitement to inquiry was allowed: no distinct observation of the particulars which compose the manifold mystery of the Gospel could enter into this system of teaching. Luther, on the contrary, considered that no good was to be looked for from ignorance; and that it was impossible for a creature like man to love or cultivate holiness with uniform devotion, unless he had a clear knowledge of the truth to guide and comfort him. He now, therefore, turned his attention to the improvement of the means of public instruction. In the greater part of the country there were no preachers. Such had been the melancholy negligence of the clergy, that few possessed sufficient acquaintance with the Scriptures to enable them to address the people.

The mass-book alone had furnished them with as much instruction as they thought necessary to dispense. Luther found that it would be impossible to raise up at once a band of teachers from among men so habituated to speak only by rote. To supply the present necessity, therefore, he circulated homilies throughout the country, and desired that they might be used for a time in the place of sermons. In taking this step he had to encounter the opposition of the bishops; but it was not till they proved themselves indifferent to the state of the people, and determined to resist the progress of the truth, that he counselled the elector to adopt such a measure. The reform of public worship was carried on with similar zeal; but he appears to have still dreaded the evil effects of too hasty a change in the mere ceremonies of the church, and thereby acted consistently with the grand principles of his reformation. In proving that no ceremonies, or system founded on forms of worship, can lead men to salvation, or permanently influence their hearts, he proved, in a great degree, that they are as powerless in one way as they are in another. But though comparatively unimportant in themselves, if viewed side by side with doctrine and precept, they acquire an essential importance when the people attach to them a notion of sanctity, and when, by long usage, they are become the first links in the wide extending associations of religious feeling. To alter them too suddenly, in such cases, is like pulling down the ancient edifices of a city, and destroying the memorials of ages in which events occurred, dear to the hearts of men, and long contemplated as monuments to the virtues of their forefathers. But if the preservation of these buildings is continued at the expense of health and convenience — if the circulation of light and air is impeded by their jutting angles and cumbrous colonnades — it is certainly wise, on the part of those who have sufficient influence with the people, to show them how they may still retain what is valuable to memory, though they allow the gradual removing of these cumbrous

piles. Neither religious nor patriotic feeling is of much value, perhaps, if it cannot exist without supports which good sense requires to be relinquished.

That Luther acted with a full consideration of the subject, appears from the discriminating view which he took of it under different circumstances. Thus, while warning the elector against precipitate changes at Wittenberg, where his power was supreme, he strongly urged him to enforce reform in such places as remained perversely attached to superstition. This appears by his letter to the prince respecting the condition of the people at Altenburg. The canons of the collegiate church there had refused to correct abuses, which none but the most bigoted of the Romish party attempted to defend. This was to stop the progress of improvement, and defy the general sense of a community rejoicing in the prospect of complete emancipation from the power of darkness. Luther directed the preachers of Altenburg to take the first step, and appeal to the common sense and fears of the canons. "Represent to them," he said, "the danger they incur by irritating the people; let them know that the elector will not allow any portion of a church under his control to persevere in practices which are idolatrous. Tell them, however, that if they cannot renounce the mass without offending their consciences, they must say it in private; and that they may be assured of a hearing, if they are willing to defend by Scripture the continuance of their former practices. Whatever be their reply," he added, "they ought not to be deprived of their honours and revenues."

A. D. 1527. It was at this period that the states of Europe were engaged in the most important struggle that the political world had seen since the fall of the Roman empire. France, Spain, England, and the head of the Germanic confederacy, had now to determine the grand question, whether one imperial monarchy was to throw its shadow over all the rest, or whether each, by the balance of power, was to enjoy freedom and national independence.

The petty states of dismembered Italy afforded unceasing occasions for dispute; while the crooked and subtle policy of the popes supplied stimulants which converted every dispute into a war. Francis I. had only just returned from captivity, when Clement discovered that it would be for his interest to break with the emperor, and form an alliance with the French king and Henry of England. But so badly had he calculated his forces in this affair, that the imperial troops reached the gates of Rome with the swiftness of an eagle. In vain he trusted to the sacredness of the place and of his character. The duke de Bourbon, who led the army, was the first to ascend the walls: his soldiers followed, as eager for plunder as if they had been sacking the fortress of idolaters or infidels. No respect was paid to the spot which had been revered by nations as the centre, the eye of Christendom. The most daring licentiousness characterised the conquerors; and the pope himself, with all his cardinals, was locked up a prisoner in the castle of St. Angelo.*

The emperor, on hearing of this event, did not act as his professions might have led the catholic community to expect. Instead of annulling the deed which a violent and thoughtless soldiery had committed, he kept the pontiff in captivity for several months; and then only released him on the payment of a ransom, and after receiving faithful promises that a general council should be summoned for the correction of abuses and grievances.

An occurrence of this kind could not fail to produce a deep impression on the minds of both catholics and reformers. Those who remained firm in their attachment to the church must have witnessed, with equal sorrow and indignation, the father of the faithful thus trampled on by a haughty sovereign: to this portion of the people, therefore, an increase of zeal would result from the misfortunes of the pope. But by far the

* Seckendorf, lib. ii. sec. xii. p. 23.

larger class consisted of those who had long since suspected his right to more than a formal reverence. With them, his degradation would be productive of still greater indifference ; and they would regard him in the light only of a defeated politician, who, having trusted to weak counsels, now reaped the proper fruit of his folly. It had been thus on all occasions, when the head of the church, embroiling himself in the disputes of worldly potentates, was obliged to sacrifice his dignity to secure his safety. The reformers, on the other hand, were well entitled to triumph at the spectacle thus afforded them. They had been accused of not rendering implicit obedience to the pope ; but he was now treated with no more respect, by the catholic head of the empire, than any other petty prince vanquished in war. A stronger argument could not have been advanced in their favour, when opposed by that numerous party who willingly acknowledged themselves loyal subjects of the emperor, and admirers of his policy. In respect to their future prospects, the event was full of promise. It essentially weakened the power, by destroying the union, of their principal enemies ; and there was every reason to believe that many of those who had adhered to the Romish party, from the supposition that it was unalterable in its elements and constitution, would now yield to the influence of the young and energetic spirit of reform.

But while the elector of Saxony was diligently pursuing the noble purposes to which he had devoted himself, and inducing, by his example, the landgrave of Hesse, Albert of Prussia, and other princes, to adopt the most extensive measures of improvement, these excellent men saw a storm gathering over their heads, which it would require no less prudence than courage to evade. A league, it was said, had been formed against them, the composition of which was such that they knew it could not long remain inactive. To defend themselves, therefore, against any sudden attack, became an immediate duty, if the ordinary principles of policy were

still to be followed. Such, however, was the situation of the German princes, at this period, that they were unable to determine whether it was lawful or not to prepare against aggressions which might at once involve both themselves and their subjects in irretrievable ruin. The elector of Saxony, in this dilemma, had appealed to Luther. At Mentz, at Spire, and, lastly, at Eslingen, meetings of the several powers had only served to expose more clearly the intentions of the catholic party. The landgrave of Hesse, who added a certain degree of vehemence to the piety and good sense which marked his character, urged the elector to take immediate measures for their mutual defence. But Luther replied to the questions of his prince that though it would have been lawful for him to resist the attacks of any inferior potentate, it would not be so to take up arms against the head of the empire, to whom both he and the other princes had sworn faithful allegiance; and that, consequently, should he be attacked, even to the spoiling of his possessions and of his dignity, he must only offer such a resistance as might be made by prayers and protestations. It is easy to perceive that the correctness of Luther's principles thus laid down, depends upon the view taken of the conditions on which the princes of Germany were bound in allegiance to the emperor. The advice was the more bold and conscientious from the circumstances under which it was given: for it had just been proposed that the imperial cities should be put under the ban of the empire; and duke George had publicly said that, though the Turks were almost at their gates, the extirpation of Lutheranism demanded more immediate attention than their defence against the infidel. Had the advice of this prince, or that of the margrave of Baden, whom Ferdinand had appointed regent during his absence in Bohemia, been followed, the pacific counsels of Luther would have had little effect. The public sense of injury, the minds of a vast community insulted under the pretence of law, would have instantly

broken through all the restraints which his view of the subject might have imposed.

The gloom which oppressed Germany from political causes, at this period, was rendered doubly oppressive by the appearance of a pestilential disorder, which swept off many thousands of the people. Luther had always regarded the success of the Turks as a punishment sent by God. He had even declared that they ought not to be resisted. But he now yielded to the general impression of melancholy. The plague had obliged the elector to remove both his court and the members of the university from Wittemberg, and Luther remained almost alone in the city. Death reigned around him, and the worst apprehensions were entertained for his safety. The elector earnestly entreated him to leave the place, and there were not wanting arguments to show that his preservation, in the present state of affairs, was a matter of public concern. But he contended, both in his own case and that of others, that flight was only lawful for those who had no especial duty to perform. So strongly did he feel this, that though suffering under the deepest melancholy that ever oppressed him, he continued to struggle on, visiting the sick and the dying, and doing whatever the little strength which remained to him would allow. His letters at this period, breathe the most sorrowful sentiments, and express the afflictions of a strong heart, assailed both from within and without. To the natural influence of grievous apprehensions, were added the still more depressing fears of his peculiarly constituted mind. However great its strength, it had been over-wrought; and in this season of languor all the doubts that had assailed it, before conviction was attained, appear to have rushed back upon it like stifling tempest clouds, or an army of demons resolved on possessing themselves of the knowledge, the faith, and piety which formed its riches. It was, however, to the physical state of his frame that most of this melancholy might properly be attributed; for after suffering some time, without a

hope of relief, a violent perspiration seized him, and as he began slowly to recover his former state of health, the terror which had oppressed him gradually died away, and enabled him to employ those resources of thought and prayer, the only remedies sufficiently powerful for the diseases of mighty minds like his.*

A great crisis was approaching; nor shall we err, perhaps, if we suppose that Luther's spirits, at this time, might be influenced, in some degree, by that species of innate foresight, those strangely foreboding feelings, which have so often been found to affect the minds of public men on the eve of important events. Nor is it altogether unreasonable to suppose that, in being thus kept back from exertion for a season, he was imperceptibly undergoing a preparation for yet more vigorous labour when the hour should arrive for putting to the test every principle he had advocated, and the whole system which had been established through his means. This was the least active year of his life; but considered in such a point of view, it might be one of the most important. The only signs of any remaining activity which Luther displayed, during this period of depression, appeared in his regular preaching; in the composition of a little treatise on war, which he considered lawful only in extreme cases; and lastly, in his controversy with the Swiss reformers Bucer and Zuingle. He had authorised the former of these active labourers in the field, to translate some of his works into Latin,—a task which was commenced, it seems, with the express understanding, that the translator might modify certain expressions where he saw fit, and add, if he chose, remarks and annotations. But when the publications appeared, Luther discovered that Bucer had not merely endeavoured to turn his language into phrases which might serve to render the general style of his arguments more determinate and expressive, but

* Carlostadt fled about this time. Luther speaks of him as incorrigible.

† Bucer, tom. iii. The most interesting of his letters are those to Justus Jonas, Spalatinus.

that he had inserted observations and notes which bore directly against his opinions on the subject of the sacrament. With his usual eagerness of temper, he instantly wrote to the printer at Basle, and declared that Bucer had crucified the work by his poisonous observations, and committed nothing less than sacrilege.*

To this accusation, the translator mildly replied, that he had taken no further liberty than that which was always justly allowed to one who sought to increase the circulation of a work not his own: that if he agreed with the substance of what it contained, but considered some points advanced in it erroneous, he only performed his duty in stating why he rejected them; and still further, that he had expressly stipulated with Luther's friend Bougenhague, through whom the correspondence was carried on, that he should be allowed the liberty of correcting what he might deem unsound or falsely expressed.

Thus unhappily was created a fresh cause for angry feeling between Luther and the divines of Switzerland. Zuingle said he lamented the enmity which existed in his mind; and displayed in the whole of his conduct a great superiority, in respect to temper, over his opponent. Scarcely any expression of contempt could have been used, which Luther did not employ when speaking of the opinions of the Swiss on the subject of the sacrament. Zuingle hoped that he might still convince him of the injustice of this abuse, and of the reasonableness and scriptural truth of the arguments by which they had been led to abolish the mass. He, therefore, addressed him in a work which professed to contain a full explication of his doctrine. The treatise was worthy of the design for which it had been written; and ought to have secured for both himself and his followers the respect and friendship of Luther. But, instead of softening, it appeared only to increase the angry nature of his feelings. Not content with answering the arguments of his opponents, he could not

* Briefe, l. iii. p. 201. De Wette.

resist the temptation of heaping up epithets on their names, which we now read with disgust. The title of his book was, "A Defence of the Words of Jesus Christ, 'This is my body,' against the fanatical spirit of the Sacramentarians." It is impossible not to be struck with delight at the noble moderation which Zuingli displayed in answering this abusive publication. He would not, he said, at the conclusion of his argument, undertake a confutation of Luther's insulting expressions. He had sufficient patience to endure them quietly, and feared not to rest on his innocence as the best defence which could be offered to such attacks.

Zuingli had, indeed, too pure and exalted a spirit to sacrifice that self-possession and tranquillity, which were so much required, to such a species of controversy. The state of the reformed party in Switzerland demanded the most careful attention. It was, in many respects, prosperous. Superstition lost first one, and then another of its strong holds. A knowledge of the simple truths of Scripture, diffused throughout the cantons, had created such a spirit of inquiry, that no persuasions could induce the mass of the people to join with the catholic clergy in anathematising the reformers. But, notwithstanding this, several of the cantons, with their magistrates and priests, continued not only to defend themselves against reform, but to make desperate assaults on the professors of the new opinions. The best resistance that could be offered to the activity of this party was the employment of every legitimate means for making the people acquainted with the real state of the argument. Not only, therefore, were the Scriptures widely circulated, and numerous treatises published, containing information on all the principal points of the dispute, but general assemblies, like those first summoned at Zurich, continued to be held; and in these meetings, the advocates of each party were fairly put to the trial of stating and defending their opinions as they best could.

One of these assemblies was held at Berne, at the close of the year 1527. The topics for dispute were

arranged under ten heads, and stated in a paper widely circulated previous to the day of meeting. Of the ten articles thus proposed to be defended, the substance was, "that Jesus Christ is the sole head of the church, the foundation and rule of which is faith, founded on the word of God: that Christ alone has expiated sin: that it cannot be proved by Scripture that the body of Christ is really and corporally eaten in the sacrament of the last supper: that the sacrifice of the mass is contrary to Scripture, and opposed to the one sufficient sacrifice of Christ himself: that purgatory having no foundation in Scripture, prayers for the dead, and the other rites performed for them, are vain and useless ceremonies: that it is contrary to the word of God to have and to worship images, and that they ought to be removed from the churches: that marriage is not forbidden, but rather enjoined; and, lastly, that a state of celibacy, not well observed, is bad for any class of persons, but much more so for the clergy."*

It had been found necessary on this, as on similar occasions, to insist that Scripture should be the sole authority appealed to as conclusive in the debate. The reasonableness of such a demand is now so plain, that it is a matter of the greatest astonishment how any class of christians could ever have disputed its propriety. But so obnoxious was it considered by the catholic party, that it seems to have been always sufficient to induce them either to keep from the scene of contest, or to make, when there, the most unfair attempts to evade the appeal. At Berne, the defenders of the above propositions, resolved not to leave the stand which they had taken on the truths of Scripture, repressed every approach to sophistry and the vague quotation of uninspired authorities. Finding this to be the case, the few opponents present soon ceased from the charge; and at the close of the meeting, the magistrates ordered that both the mass and the use of images should be abolished in that city and its territory.

* Ruchat, t. i. liv. iii. p. 429.

'This was another step towards the accomplishment ^{A. D.} of the great end for which the Almighty had raised ^{1528.} up so many noble spirits, awoke the world, so long oppressed with torpor, and poured light into the most secret recesses of superstition. It might have been thought that Luther, notwithstanding their differences of opinion on the subject of the sacrament, would still have rejoiced at the triumph of those whose principal object it plainly was to root out error, to expose it to the test of divine truth, and, under all circumstances, establish Scripture as the rule of faith. But it was not so. Luther had unfortunately the human weakness to regard his own particular views as of more consequence than principles which were necessarily of universal importance and efficacy. Zuingle was rather to be treated as an enemy, because he contended for the figurative interpretation of Christ's words in the communion, than to be loved and admired for his grand defence of their common right to appeal to Scripture; to give the Bible to mankind at large, and to believe, and preach, and act according to its dictates.

No sooner was it announced to him that Berne, and then Constance, and soon after Geneva, had joined the party of Zuingle, than he drew up a confession of faith, the main purport of which was the contradiction of the articles held by the Sacramentarians. Of the three heads into which it is divided, the first refers to the tenets of Zuingle; the second to those of Œcolampadius; while, under the third, he sets forth his own. His confidence in the correctness of his opinions on the subject of the sacrament was as strong as his faith in the Scriptures themselves. He spoke on the subject as if it were impossible that he should not have discovered the exact interpretation of the mystery; and hence the horror and the intemperate indignation with which he contemplated the doctrines of the Sacramentarians.* It is, however, highly probable that his sen-

"I am preparing," he says, in a letter to Nic. Hau-man, "against the Sacramentarians. Do thou pray that Christ may direct my pen well and

timents were in some degree affected by the supposed union of Carlostad with the most dangerous faction that had ever assumed a religious character. Carlostad was his earliest opponent on the subject of the mass. By Carlostad were his repose and confidence first disturbed; and, if Luther was influenced as men ordinarily are by strong associations, it is easy to see that the peculiar points on which they differed were those which he was most likely to regard with suspicion in after times.

While these disputes were occupying the minds of those who considered that the knowledge of the truth was of more importance to them than their worldly condition, the attention of all who had any part to perform in the affairs of public life was forcibly turned to the proceedings of the kings of France and England, and of the archduke Ferdinand, who was at present engaged in a violent struggle for the crown of Hungary. Francis I., burning with the desire of recovering his former greatness and importance, had entered into a treaty with Henry VIII., the foundation of which was their mutual determination to lessen the power of the emperor. Charles, on the other hand, feeling, as it appears, not only as a prince, but as a man, when he saw the unjust combination formed against him, spoke in terms of unmeasured indignation and contempt respecting the conduct of the French monarch. The latter repelled these insults by a challenge; to which his imperial majesty immediately replied, by not only accepting the defiance, but by expressing his desire to meet the challenger with all convenient speed. Francis saw sufficient reason to allow this affair

prosperously against satan. I rejoice that thou art not, as I always believed, infected with that leaven. It grieves me that that admirable man, Oecolampadius, should be so driven into the pit by satan, and by such foolish thoughts. May God deliver him therefrom." He says, in a letter written a few days after to Spalatin, "I am again proceeding against the Sacramentarians. Pray for me, that Christ may be propitious, seeing it is his own cause."—*Briefe*, tom. iii. pp. 154-156. In the month of March, he writes to another friend, "The doctrine of Zinglius and Oecolampadius is spreading. I am writing a German work against it. Be not infected with this opinion; it is a blasphemy against the word and the faith of Christ."—*Ibid.* p. 165.

to cease, and attack his enemy by the more effectual methods of regular warfare and state policy.

The union of France and England afforded a timely diversion in favour of the German reformers. Ferdinand, moreover, to whose steady exertions against them might be ascribed many of their late anxieties, had amply enough to occupy his attention in his attempts on Hungary. The rival pretender to that throne was the waywode of Transylvania. He had been elected to the dignity by the unanimous voice of the nobles, with the exception of three whom he accused of being tempted by poverty to sell their votes to Ferdinand. Finding himself unable to contend successfully against the power of that prince, he appealed to the several states of Germany; and it was now to be learnt whether the several governments of a dismembered country could, in the season of difficulty, avail themselves suddenly of a great political advantage.

We have seen the elector of Saxony inquiring of Luther whether any circumstances would justify his resisting the attacks of the emperor made against him and his allies, on the principles of religious persecution. Every day afforded some fresh proof of the necessity of determining this question; or rather the question, whether the members of a free state should allow secret machinations to be carried on for their destruction, without employing any means to resist the approaching tempest. Luther had taught the elector that in no case might he oppose the power of the emperor by hostile means; and with this answer that amiable and pious prince would probably have remained contented, but for a circumstance which brought to his counsels the superior firmness and resolution of the landgrave of Hesse. Philip was a sovereign who, at all times ready to act, possessed qualities which admirably fitted him to be the ally of Frederic. By an unexpected communication from Othon Paccius, the chancellor of George of Saxony, and who regarded the landgrave as a private friend, the latter learnt that an extensive plot was already formed against him and the elector. The chiefs of the hostile

league were said to be duke George himself, the archbishop of Mentz, the two dukes of Bavaria, the archbishop of Saltzbourg, the elector of Brandebourg, and Ferdinand. Several other bishops and princes were supposed to have secretly given their assent to the design, the main object of which, as stated by Paccius, was to ruin the landgrave and the elector, and exterminate the religion of which they were such distinguished supporters.

The treaty by which the confederates bound themselves to the execution of this project, was signed at Breslau, on the twelfth of May, 1527. Ferdinand, it appeared, secured his own interests in the affair, by insisting that their earliest efforts should be employed in securing him the crown of Hungary. This being accomplished, they were next to address the elector of Saxony; and should he still refuse to expel Luther and the Lutherans from his dominions, the troops which had been led against Hungary were to be employed in reducing him to obedience, and finally depriving him of his states. To effect this, duke George was to invade Silesia and Bavaria: king Ferdinand, Saxony, Misnia, and Thuringia; and the bishops, the duchy of Cobourg. Some difficulty existed from the circumstance that duke George was the father-in-law of the landgrave of Hesse, and equally closely allied to the elector. But the embarrassment was soon removed, on the suggestion, that with regard to the landgrave he was yet young, and might be treated with lenity, in the hope that he would retract his errors; while the alliance between the duke and the elector might be considered as null and void, on the plea that the league was formed in the cause of the emperor, who, like the pope, was exempted from the force of such engagements.*

It was further agreed that, when the design was accomplished, the territory of the vanquished elector should be divided among the conquerors. Thus, duke George stipulated for the electoral provinces: the archbishop of Magdebourg, for the principality of that city: Ferdinand

* Sleidan, t. i. liv. vi. p. 251. Seckendorf

was to have the possessions in Silesia ; and the rest, such rewards in money as might be derived from the division of the lesser spoils.

The landgrave, when he received this intelligence, was at Dresden, on a visit to the duke, his father-in-law. Startled at the communication, he with difficulty gave it credit ; but Paccius immediately offered to procure him a sight of the original document, if he would pay the sum of 4000 florins. To satisfy him, however, without delay he produced a copy of the instrument, as signed and sealed by the duke, and which had every appearance of authenticity. The landgrave could no longer hesitate to believe an account the truth of which was thus strongly supported. His situation was, therefore, equally perilous and distressing. Duke George was nearly connected with him, and there were many reasons which would make an open rupture between them full of painful consequences. The elector, on the other hand, was his faithful and affectionate ally ; bound to him not only by common political interests, but by the friendship which had been begun and was cemented by their communion in the same persecuted faith. Philip was too good a prince not to be able to decide between these conflicting calls upon his allegiance ; and, having come to a resolution on the subject, he acted with his customary promptitude. Exhibiting no sign of uneasiness which could lead the duke to suspect his knowledge of the plot, he set out from Dresden to seek the elector of Saxony, who was now at Weimar. As astonished as the landgrave himself had been, that prince called to mind some circumstances which seemed strongly to confirm the truth of what Paccius had related. The margrave of Brandebourg, it appears, had shortly before informed him that he had seen the elector of Brandebourg at Breslau, with a parchment in his hand which had several seals affixed to it. What was still more to the purpose, Casimir, the brother of duke George, had on his death-bed made some observations which purported that the Lutherans would

soon become the objects of a general attack. These circumstances received a further weight from its being well known that many meetings had taken place between the catholic chiefs, the design of which they had studiously concealed.

It was evident to the elector that only the most vigorous measures could save him from the impending ruin. He therefore signed a treaty with the landgrave, by which they bound themselves to raise forthwith an army of 20,000 foot and 6000 horse, and to remain faithful to each other, though to the sacrifice of their possessions and their lives. They then appealed to such states as had shown themselves favourable to the reformation, and received the most encouraging answer from Albert, duke of Prussia, who promised not only to aid them himself, but to procure the assistance of the king of Poland. The king of Denmark also intimated his willingness to join in their quarrel; and the same feeling and determination was expressed by several of the free cities, and even by the states of Magdebourg, notwithstanding the intentions of the archbishop.

Thus far the prospects of the elector and the landgrave were bright and cheering. The readiness with which their cause had been espoused afforded a striking proof of the enthusiasm which prevailed in favour of the reformation. To defend their own rights was to uphold the religious freedom of Germany at large; and this was so clearly recognised that they had every reason to believe that the power of the emperor, with that of the catholic princes, would be overbalanced by the fresh and earnest vigour of the new party.

The preparations for war could not be carried on in silence. At Wittemberg the liveliest excitement prevailed when it was understood that the elector was on the eve of hostile movements. Luther and Melancthon, with the rest of the clergy, regarded such a proceeding as both unjustifiable and dangerous. Their sentiments weighed greatly with the elector, who, naturally mild and timid, now seemed to be less than ever disposed to

trust to his own decisions. In this state of uncertainty he was sought by Pontanus, his chancellor, who supported with all his influence the opinions of Luther and Melancthon. Reasoning as a politician, he pointed out not only the hazard of the undertaking, but the extreme uncertainty of the grounds in which it had originated. Paccius, he observed, might have been mistaken, or might, from some unknown motives, have acted deceitfully; and these reasons, he contended, ought to be sufficient to induce caution, and to content the elector with remaining on his guard against any sudden attack, instead of rashly commencing a war which might only terminate in the ruin of his states.*

These persuasions and arguments so far prevailed with the elector as to induce him to send to the landgrave of Hesse, and urge the necessity of their remaining tranquil till the intentions of the confederates should assume a more decided character. It was with difficulty that Philip could be persuaded to agree to this cautious address; but finding the elector resolved on not acting with the promptitude which seemed necessary, he could only submit, and await the progress of events. In the mean time, however, he wrote to his father-in-law, informing him of the steps he had taken, and of the reasons in which they originated. He thanked him, he said, for the kind regard he had taken of his interests in the treaty at Breslau, and was sorry to have given him uneasiness by being a heretic; but he begged to assure him that he was himself still more grieved at finding him so bigoted an enemy to truth, which, whatever might be the consequences, he was determined to defend with all his ability, and even to the shedding of the last drop of his blood. To this he added, that it ought not to be supposed he would remain idle while powerful enemies were plotting the ruin of his people, and of that cause which he had so long sought to establish. No: he would anticipate

* Beausobre, t. iv. liv. vii. p. 41. Seckendorf, lib. ii. sec. 13, p. 97. Sleidan.

their movements, and trusted that God, seeing the justice of his proceedings, would give success to his arms. At the same time, however, he expressed his regret, that such should be the state of things between him and a prince with whom he was so nearly allied as the duke: he reminded him of the promptness with which he had hastened to his succour against the insurgents in Thuringia, and expressed his readiness to show similar zeal and affection whenever he chose to put them to the proof. The elector of Saxony, he said, entertained the same sentiments; and all they now required was, that he should cease from prosecuting a design which, while it would desolate the empire, would break asunder all those ties which it was their duty and interest to preserve entire.

George of Saxony immediately answered this letter by protesting, that the account of the treaty signed at Breslau was wholly a fabrication, and demanding, therefore, that the landgrave should make known the author of the falsehood, or bear the dishonour of being regarded as the inventor of it himself. He then wrote to the princes who had been named as parties in the design, and every where circulated a manifesto, declaring his innocence, and accusing the landgrave of being engaged in effecting purposes of private ambition and aggrandisement. The defence of the duke was speedily followed by that of the other supposed confederates, and Philip of Hesse found himself exposed to the necessity of proving that he acted on proper and sufficient evidence, or bearing the blame of having basely endeavoured to excite a war for his own advantage.

In accordance with the wishes of the accused princes, Paccius was put to his examination before their several envoys. To their questions he answered distinctly, that what he had told the landgrave was founded on truth. The latter, therefore, turning to the deputies, required them to justify him before their masters, and show them how he had only acted according to information which appeared sufficient to justify his proceed-

ings. Paccius was next examined by the new chancellor of the duke, but required permission to retire till the next day. He then entered upon his defence; explained how the treaty became known to him; what were his motives for divulging the secret to the landgrave, and by what collateral evidence his original suspicions were confirmed. To all this the envoy of the duke replied with no slight force of argument; and the several ambassadors joined with him in desiring that the unfortunate Paccius might be put to the torture. The landgrave of Hesse had the humanity to deny this request, and referred the decision of the affair to the elector of Treves and the elector palatine. Paccius he retained some time in prison, and then banished him into Flanders, where a few years afterwards he lost his head.

The only sufferers in this strange occurrence were the prelates who had been accused of joining in the league. It was on condition that they paid 100,000 crowns that Philip agreed to lay down his arms. An attempt was made to rescind this article in the treaty of peace; but Philip remained firm in his determination to bear no loss for having prepared against an attack which there had long been so much reason to expect.* Luther and Melancthon, though convinced of the existence of the treaty of Breslau, strongly urged upon the elector the necessity of cherishing peace. And it now required the counsel of such men to support even a prince of his mild character in this passive state. Soon after the commotions which existed had been made known abroad, the emperor addressed him in a letter which could only

* The learned editor of Sleidan observes on this subject, that never was there a more flagrant act of extortion; for since the expenses of the armament raised by the landgrave had been caused by his giving credence to a false report, he only had a right to bear them, and not they against whom he had so unwarrantably proceeded. Sleidan, t. i. liv. vi. p. 252. Supposing, indeed, that the point in dispute was really so fully cleared up as to leave no just suspicion of a portion of the accusation being true, this remark is perfectly just; but many reasons existed for the landgrave's putting himself in a state of defence; and several persons continued to believe, as Sleidan himself observes, that what Paccius had stated was not altogether false.

have been dictated by the haughtiest and most tyrannical of spirits. It pretended to warn and counsel the elector like a mere dependent on the will of his chief: it spoke of pardon and clemency exercised towards him; and of the gratitude which the guilty ought to exhibit when thus, by the mercy of the sovereign, left unpunished.

In the midst of these disturbances, the doctrines of the reformed religion were rapidly establishing themselves in the minds and affections of the people. At Strasburg, the senate, after having long carried on a struggle with the catholic party, announced its desire that the points in dispute might be fairly discussed and decided by the most learned men of each persuasion. An assembly was accordingly convened: but the Romanists refusing to attend, or offer any defence of their practices, the senate passed a decree prohibiting their priests from preaching; and stating, as the reason for this command, that they employed their time in accusing others of teaching heresy, while they themselves delivered doctrines which they feared to defend. Having adopted this measure, they prayed the council of the empire, assembled at Spire, to confirm the decree; but that body replied that it hoped no change would be made till the assembling of a general council, or, at least, till the meeting of the diet, in which they could make known their desires, and where they might expect to receive a gracious and satisfactory reply. It also intimated that, should they act precipitately, they would only bring down upon themselves the resentment of the emperor, or his lieutenant, Ferdinand, who, being charged with sovereign authority, would take the most speedy measures for punishing any offence against the majesty of the laws.

Such was the message brought by the deputies of the imperial senate. It produced little effect on the minds of the people of Strasburg. As useless were the efforts of the bishop of the see, who employed every entreaty and argument that could be suggested

to rouse the higher classes in his favour. The senate again assembled: it cautiously stated what had been communicated to it respecting the sentiments of the emperor; and the consequences which might be expected were the mass and other rights of the Romish church abolished in the city. But it reminded the people, at the same time, that they had greater reason to fear God than man; and that, therefore, it should be carefully considered whether it would not be better to incur the displeasure of the monarch, than tempt the judgments of God by their retaining the corruptions of error and superstition.*

At the close of the discussion, the whole mass of the population was directed to assemble by tribes, and declare what resolution had been adopted. On the appointed day the meeting took place; and the voices of the people being in favour of the abolition of the mass and other rites of Romanism, the senate decreed that they should cease; till such time, at least, as advocates could be found willing and able to defend their re-introduction. The bishop, on being informed of what had occurred, replied, that he received the intelligence with much affliction, but that he must suffer patiently, and endeavour to perform his duty in the best manner he could. Thus was effected one of the noblest triumphs of popular feeling over the powerful illusions of ancient error, recorded in the annals of the reformation.

The changes which had taken place in the order of religious affairs now began to be felt, not only by the march of improvement, but by the birth of new necessities, which had scarcely been anticipated till they claimed immediate attention. There was no established confession of faith; no fixed rule of church discipline; no certain or recognised power, through which to continue the succession of the clergy, and supply the congregations with well instructed and authorised teachers. It was much to be feared that this state of things,

* Sleidan, tom. i. liv. vi. p. 257.

if continued, would open the door for countless abuses and disorders. Fanaticism, with its attendant licentiousness, was still on the increase; and if once the mass of the people should become infected with that fatal malady, it was well known that the great objects of the reformation would be more distant than ever. Having carefully considered, therefore, the present wants of the people, Luther and his associates determined that a visitation of the several congregations ought to be immediately effected. The elector having been appealed to, gave his ready assent to this proposal; and several preachers, accompanied by a proportionate number of persons connected with the government, were forthwith despatched to make the tour of the electorate. Luther's letters abound with allusions to this important work. He evidently considered it as more conducive than any general measure as yet proposed, to the increase and security of the reformed church. On the return of the visitors, Melancthon undertook the task of drawing up a *Formulary* for the assistance of pastors set over congregations in the various parts of the country.

This address of Melancthon is a useful and interesting document. It affords us considerable light in examining the doctrines of the reformers, and the discipline intended to be pursued under the new system. Luther added an introduction, and corrected it, especially in those parts which relate to the sacrament of the last supper, before it was allowed to go forth. His opinions, his thoughts, and spirit, may, therefore, be looked for in all the more important parts.* It is divided into eighteen chapters, of which the first two are devoted to the doctrine of justification by faith, and the nature of the moral law. These subjects are connected by the prefatory observation, that Christianity

* It was by the especial direction of the elector that Luther undertook the revision of this tract, the points to which his attention was chiefly called being those which related to the sacrament of the Lord's supper, and the degrees within which matrimony might be considered lawful. The work, when finished, was entitled "Instructions for the Pastors of the Electorate of Saxony, prescribed by the Visitors."—*Seckendorf*, lib. ii. sec. xiii. p. 102.

consists of two parts: that is to say, repentance, or the sorrow which the sinner feels on account of his guilt; and faith, or the confidence which he possesses that God pardons our sins for the sake of Jesus Christ; the former part including the performance of all those good works commanded by the law. In the article on baptism, it is simply said, that the only true anointing is the unction of the Holy Spirit; leaving the reader to gather therefrom that the use of oil in the sacrament was not necessary. The remarks on the Lord's supper are more extended and distinct. They support the doctrine of the real presence of the body and blood of Christ, the propriety of administering both the bread and the wine to the laity, and the various rites and particulars of discipline which had been lately established at Wittenberg. In the sixth article, which treats of penitence, we discover traces of a feeling which may safely be ascribed to the effects produced on the mind of Luther by the united influence of experience and the example of Melancthon's own mildness and moderation. Preachers are here directed to exhort the people with as much simplicity as earnestness; and especially to refrain from such violent statements as this, — that we sin even in our good works, — a style of expression which, though only intended to humble human pride and vanity, might lead uninstructed minds into sin and error.

In the tenth article of this formulary, the constitution of the church, and the nature of ceremonies, of festivals, and other particulars connected with the old establishment, are considered. The observance of these things is not altogether abolished. Christians, it is said, must always be bound to respect the laws of the Gospel, and such institutions as are founded thereon. Of the festivals, those were ordered to be kept, as formerly, which referred to events in the history of Christ; and some even of those which commemorated the Virgin Mary, the apostles, and the more distinguished of the primitive saints. The invocation of saints, on the

other hand, with all the ceremonies attending it, together with the superstitious rites of the mass, were utterly prohibited and condemned, as contrary to the Gospel and a pure faith.

The fifteenth article relates to the office of preaching. And here the teacher is warned against speaking in fierce or rude terms of the pope and the bishops; but to endeavour, by sober exhortations, to instruct and convince the people; sparing, that is, the persons of those from whom they differed, while strenuously labouring to stop the progress of their errors. This rule was probably rendered necessary by the prevalence of a practice to which Luther himself had first given vogue, — the practice of leaving no epithet unemployed which could heap contempt and hatred on the head of an adversary. In the seventeenth article particular mention is made of the office of superintendents, by whom candidates for the ministry were to be examined previous to ordination, and to whom also pertained the power of admitting such as seemed qualified to the exercise of the sacred functions. They were, moreover, endowed with authority to chastise the erring and licentious, and, when their exhortations failed, to deliver them to the magistrate.

It requires but little consideration to discover, that, though the doctrines of Luther form the basis of these instructions, a gentler spirit had been at work to soften down the asperities which they might otherwise have been expected to present. So widely different, indeed, did the document appear from the usual addresses of the father of the reformation, that several, both of his friends and enemies, doubted whether it had appeared by his authority, or whether Melanethon had not renounced his tenets, and begun to seek the favour either of another party of separatists, or of the court of Rome itself. There is, indeed, reason to believe that Melanethon thought differently from Luther on many points, and especially on the methods to be employed in confuting an adversary, and establishing the profession of

the Gospel, where not opposed by a reprobate blindness of prejudice. He never sympathised with the indignant feeling of his great leader, when he desired, in a burst of zeal, to overwhelm those who opposed him, and make them acknowledge his doctrines, or bear his anathemas. His opinions on the Lord's supper,—on that very subject about which Luther reasoned with as much earnestness, and as great a belief in its importance, as he did on the article of justification by faith,—on that very subject did Melanethon look with a wavering and questioning mind. He is even said to have made the doctrine of the communion in the present formulary appear so little agreeable to Luther's exposition, that the latter found it necessary to expunge the passage, and describe his own views upon the subject in his own language. Notwithstanding this, the style of the formulary still remained so contrary to that of his writings in general, that some of the strictest of his followers, missing the opinions of their master, or seeing them only under a veil, which diminished their force and distinctness, began to express themselves suspicious of the whole design, and even wrote publicly against it, as tending to weaken the faith which they had received as evangelical.*

But it was not, as we have observed, the Lutherans only who suspected the formulary as failing in strength or propriety of statement. The catholics, viewing it as the composition of Melanethon alone, failed not to take advantage of its moderation to proclaim the breaking up of the enemy's camp. Faber, the great supporter of their cause in Switzerland, wrote to the reformer, expressing the delight he felt in witnessing the change which had taken place in his opinions, and assuring him, that if he would return into the bosom of the church, he might fully rely on being received, and rewarded, in a manner becoming his distinguished merit.

We naturally ask, Were there proper grounds for

* Some delay took place in the printing of the Instruction, for want of both type and paper. — *Briefe*, tom. iii. p. 287.

these suspicions? And the knowledge of facts being brought to our assistance in the interpretation of the formulary, we answer in the negative; for Melancthon, it is certain, did not put forth this document without the advice and express permission of Luther. Nor was it one of a nature in which the latter was likely to allow things to pass essentially opposed to his principles. It was to be the rule of preachers in their addresses, and public exposition of the Scriptures — the very foundation, in fact, on which, after the Bible, the system of Lutheranism was to be reared. That there was cause for some doubt and surprise, however, is not less certain; but the origin of this may be accounted for in two ways. First, by supposing Luther to have really wished the statement of his doctrines to be less bold and exclusive than formerly; or, secondly, by the consideration, that the custom which prevailed of using the strongest language in theological writings, had so far vitiated the minds of men engaged in religious inquiry, that when the fierce and intemperate style of controversy was exchanged for the sober expressions of deliberating counsel, they were generally disposed to imagine that the writer had changed his belief, or given up the chief characteristics of his doctrine.

The period had now arrived for the assembling of the diet at Spire. Luther looked forward to this event with anxiety, but he was calmer in heart and spirit than formerly. It may be suspected, not only from the document above alluded to, but from passages of his other writings, that he regarded his opponents with less indignation whenever he saw the safety of the Gospel more fully established. The fanaticism of the anabaptists afforded him fresh opportunities for expressing his thoughts on the subject of the papacy and its corruptions. Availing himself of such occasions, he spoke with a warning voice against the notion that every thing in the Roman church was to be viewed as equally the result of superstition, or that none of its rites and doctrines were founded on Scripture, because some were of its own

invention. "They had," says he, "under the papacy, the true Scriptures, the true baptism, the true sacrament of the altar, the true absolution of sins, true ministers, and a true catechism. We reject and disown the popes for no other cause than this;—not content with the Gospel, as derived from Christ and his apostles, they have, by the instigation of the devil, and not for edification, or for the defence of God's temple, added many things thereto of their own invention. They have instituted laws and ordinances, and set them up in preference to those of Jesus Christ. It may be alleged, that I have flattered the pope in what I have said above, but if he will bear this flattery of mine, I declare that I am ready to obey him as a faithful son, and renounce whatever I have written against him."

But strange as some of these expressions are; they breathe, in reality, only the same sentiments as those which influenced him at a much earlier period of his course. The greatest appearance of inconsistency is discoverable, we think, in his acknowledgment of the church of Rome as a true church, a church of apostolical origin, and yet advocating the establishment of a ministry, independent of episcopal jurisdiction, and amenable to none of those laws which derived their authority through the succession of the priesthood. It is not whether Luther was right or wrong in his views of church government, that we are here to consider; but whether he could rightly acknowledge the Roman catholic church to have been the true church, and yet proceed to set up another with a newly constituted and independent clergy.

The diet was summoned for the last day of February; ^{A. D.} and at the beginning of the following month, the arrival ^{1549.} of Ferdinand, and several other princes, with vast trains of attendants, announced the importance attached to the meeting. With no less interest in the approaching discussion, but humble and serious, the elector of Saxony entered Spire attended only by Melanethon and a few of his private domestics. To a man of

penetrating mind, the manner in which he was received by the throng of princes and nobles would have appeared as confirmations strong of the worst suspicions generated by late events. The greetings rendered him, were plainly only the forced attentions of persons who had a speedy expectation that he whom they treated with this pretended courtesy would soon be humbled before them. He had been eight days in the city before any of the princes, except those of his own immediate party, seemed to recognise his presence. The bishops especially bore themselves towards him with the haughtiest demeanour, and even scrupled not to make known their hopes that the diet would confirm the wishes of the emperor, and immediately proceed to the extermination of heresy.

But notwithstanding this, and the still more discouraging circumstance that several of their former allies seemed ready to desert the cause, Philip of Hesse and the elector retained their firmness and good spirits, trusting to the purity of their intentions, and ready, should it so please divine providence, to suffer cheerfully for his glory the worst which their enemies could inflict.

Two objects were contemplated in the calling of this diet. Solyman had already made himself master of Buda, and Hungary was every day expected to become the prize of this celebrated sultan. To provide a sufficient army, therefore, to resist the further progress of the invader, was at least as necessary as any measure for the suppression of Lutheranism. The representative of the pope, John count of Mirandola, was charged with orders to insist on the necessity of an immediate call to arms, as, at present, the prime duty of Christian princes. But pressing as seemed the necessity of this counsel, the attention of the diet, which began its sittings on the 15th of March, was first directed to the affairs of religion,—a subject on which it had so little ability to decide with either wisdom or promptness.

The address of the emperor, which was dated from Valladolid, produced a feeling of anger and disgust in

all present, except those who either from fear or hopes of promotion were wedded to his interests. Already offended by the insulting letter he had received, the elector of Saxony declared to his son that no emperor had ever before ventured on such an assumption of authority, and that he ought to remember that the rights of the electors were of much earlier origin than the power of his own house. George of Brandenburg, the landgrave of Hesse, and the representatives of the imperial cities, intimated similar feelings; and on its being proposed that the deputies from Strasburg should be excluded, because of their opposition to the edict of Worms, the assembly rushed at once into the torrent of debate.

It was plainly understood by the catholic party, that, as long as the reformers remained firmly united in fighting the common battle, little impression could be made upon their ranks. But seeds of dissension had been sown among them in the sacramental controversy; and Faber and Eckius, who knew so well their differences of opinion, seem to have been called to the diet for the express purpose of endeavouring to separate the Lutherans from the Zuinglians. The effort, however, was made in vain. Each party had the wisdom to discover that the landgrave advised rightly, when he told them that their safety demanded at least the present suppression of controversy. A similar attempt at dividing the forces of the reformers was made by an attack on the imperial cities. Threats and persuasions were both employed to make them desert the standard of reform. But neither the one nor the other prevailed against the firmness and good sense of the deputies.

After a long and vain exercise of policy, the arbitrary intentions of Ferdinand and the other imperial commissaries were fully made known. The greater number of the members of the diet had evidently pledged themselves to support their views; and when the reformers saw that a vote was passed, which, annulling the former edict of Spire, consigned them to their original state of depend-

ence, they at once declared that they would not be bound, in matters of faith and conscience, by the mere superiority of their opponents in power or number. Their assent was formally demanded on the 19th of April. They again refused to submit to the decree, and being denied a hearing, as it was suspected would be the case, they presented a paper containing their reply. This also was rejected. The next day they again appeared in the assembly, and, resolved on the measures they were to pursue, obliged the diet to receive their solemn protest against its unjust and tyrannical decree.

In this proceeding originated the appellation of *protestant*, now so extensive in its meaning, and so dear to every lover of religious liberty, and a faith founded on the Bible. The document presented to the diet contained a full statement of the reasons on which its authors had proceeded. Its purport was succinctly this; “that nothing ought to be done prejudicial to the decree of the diet of 1526, which had granted liberty of religion till the holding of a general council: that that resolution, being confirmed by the unanimous consent of all the members of the empire, could not be repealed except by their equally unanimous agreement: that in the diet of Nuremberg, the origin of the differences which prevailed had been carefully examined, and to settle them, they had placed eighty articles before the pope’s legate, but to which no answer had been returned: that they had always come to this conclusion, — that the surest and readiest way to end these disputes would be the summoning of a general council: that they could not consent to give up those opinions which they had embraced, as conformable to the word of God, while waiting for a council: that their ministers had proved by incontrovertible arguments, drawn from Scripture, that the popish mass was contrary to the institution of Jesus Christ, and the practice of the apostolic times, so that they could not conform to what was ordered by the decree of the diet, nor allow their subjects to be present at mass, in places where it was put down; nor permit

the Lord's supper to be administered in different ways in the same church: that they knew the judgment of their own churches concerning the presence of the body and the blood of Christ in the eucharist, but would not consent to make a decree against those who were of a contrary opinion, seeing that they had not been summoned, or allowed a hearing: that they approved of the clause which referred to the preaching of the Gospel according to the interpretations received in the church, for that did not determine the matter, since it was disputed which or what was the true church: that there is nothing more certain than the word of God itself, or its own explanations of its meaning; and, therefore, they had resolved that nothing should be taught but the Old and New Testament in their purity: that they are the only infallible rule, all human traditions being uncertain: that the decree of the former diet was made for the preservation of peace, but that this last would infallibly give birth to wars and troubles: that if it was pretended that the rules of the former had been broken, they would not oppose the prosecution of the offenders before proper and equitable judges:" "for these reasons," said the protesters, "we cannot approve the decree of the diet, but are ready to give an account of our conduct to the emperor, and all the princes." They added, that "they would do nothing worthy of blame, till a council, either national or general, was called: that they would preserve the peace, and not meddle with the property of others; and that they had determined in what manner they ought to proceed with respect to the anabaptists, and the future publication of works relating to their doctrines."

The Lutherans and Sacramentarians, or followers of Zuingle, had now a strong practical proof of the danger they incurred by disunion, and of the corresponding increase of power which would follow their continued agreement in the support of religious freedom. So con-

* Dupin, *Eccles. Hist.* Cent. 16.

vinced were the heads of the respective parties of this, that, after some delay, Luther and Zuingle yielded to the persuasions of the landgrave of Hesse, and consented to meet each other at Marburg. This conference took place on the 30th of September. On the one side were Luther and Melanethon, Justus Jonas, Andreas Oscan-der, Stephen Agricola, and Brentius; on the other were Zuingle, Œcolampadius, Bucer, and Hedio. The business of the meeting was begun by the Lutherans, who stated what were the points to which they chiefly objected in the system of the other party. These objectionable articles were represented as follows:—1. That there is no original sin, but only a natural infirmity and weakness; and that baptism does not take away sin from children. 2. That the Holy Ghost is not conferred by the use of the word and the sacraments, but independently of either. 3. Opinions entertained derogatory to Christ's divinity. 4. That though they greatly exalted the value of faith, they yet seemed to attribute justification to good works. 5. That they did not believe the body and blood of Christ to be really in the Lord's supper.*

In the discussion which followed, both Zuingle and Œcolampadius plainly proved that they had been unjustly suspected of any degree of heresy in their opinions respecting the Trinity, or the divine nature of Christ. On the doctrine of original sin, Zuingle professed notions which had long before attracted the attention of Luther, and increased the feeling of dislike which he entertained towards him on account of his opinions respecting the Lord's supper. This, together with the question which related to the operation of the sacraments, formed the next topic of dispute. Both

* Luther's only apology for the angry zeal he displayed on this, and other occasions, when treating of the doctrine of the sacrament, is found briefly stated in his letter to the landgrave, written at the beginning of October.—"Read and consider these things," he says. "The matter is not so trifling as they represent; but intimately regards the honour of God, and the salvation of all our souls." The letter abounds in quotations from the fathers, whose testimony he with some difficulty brings to bear upon his argument.

parties, it is probable, yielded something on these subjects. Melancthon, at least, was evidently moved by the explanations of Zuingle; and, had the debate stopped here, the several leaders of the two protestant sections might have cordially agreed to smother any minor causes of contention in forgetfulness. But the most dangerous subject yet remained to be examined. This was the nature of the Lord's supper. Zuingle and Oecolampadius both reasoned with great energy; but they desired peace; and when it was found that Luther would yield nothing, and that they could make no concessions to his judgment without violating their consciences, they expressed their earnest desire that they might yet be regarded as his brethren. To this he replied, with a sternness which seems scarcely to be justified by any view taken of his conduct, "that he would not acknowledge them as brethren, or allow them a place in the ecclesiastical assembly, seeing they believed an error."*

The points on which they agreed were then summed up. These were found in the articles on the Trinity; original sin; justification by faith; the efficacy of baptism; the usefulness and expediency of confession; the authority of magistrates; the necessity of infant baptism; and the spiritual eating of Christ in the Lord's supper. In conclusion it was stated, "that though they could not agree whether the true blood and real body of Christ were corporeally present or not, in the bread and wine of the Lord's supper, yet both parties should entertain a mutual affection and brotherly charity." Luther, not to be subdued, made answer, "that this ought to be understood of that charity only which is due even to enemies, and not of that special charity which should exist among Christians of the same persuasion."

Several days had now passed since the commencement of the discussion, and it had proceeded with more satisfaction to the landgrave than might have been

* Fleury, art. v. sec. ii.

expected. He is said, at last, to have expressed his wish that it should be brought to a close; but only on the plea that, as a dangerous infectious disorder had made its appearance, it would be safer for the theologians to hasten to their homes.* It was hoped that they retired from this friendly conference with feelings which would much diminish the danger of future disputes; that they had discovered something in each other to respect, something mutually to excuse, and but little left on which the rancour of sectarian enmity could fairly fix its hold. But the sequel proved that these expectations were without foundation, and that the genius of controversy is the true hydra, a dragon never to be subdued till assaulted by the spirit of him who slew the old serpent.

The emperor was not long left ignorant of the proceedings at Spire. Reports of the most aggravated kind reached his ears, and he was led to suppose that the protestants would shortly appear in arms, to force the rest of the states to acknowledge their tenets. On its being made known to the elector of Saxony, and the landgrave, that such falsities were in circulation, those princes came to the resolution of sending the emperor a full account of what had occurred, with the reasons which had induced them to adopt defensive measures. They accordingly met at Nuremberg, and in their own names, and those of several other princes, in which they were joined by the senate of Nuremberg, as generally representing the protestant cities, they signed a document to this purpose, and forthwith despatched it to the emperor, who was now in Italy.

Having stated their opinions on the injustice done them by the annulling of the decree, confirmed in the first diet of Spire, they proceed to the defence of their principles. "No sooner," said they, "had the Holy Scriptures begun to attract attention, and inspire men

* The editor of Sleidan observes, that he suspects this was only a feigned excuse; and that his true reason was a hearty desire to terminate a discussion, which the eagerness of the disputants seemed likely to prolong beyond proper bounds."—*Sleidan*, tom. i. liv. vi. p. 267.

with a desire to examine religion for themselves, than a vast number of persons, both of the clergy and laity, discovered the unsoundness of many of the dogmas and rites which they had been taught to receive with implicit confidence. These persons have since this discovery earnestly desired a reformation; and they have embraced that which is begun, notwithstanding the opposition of those who pretend that the religion of our forefathers, being the most ancient, must necessarily be the best and the safest to follow. Deaf to such arguments, and fully assured that no length of years can render that true which is in itself false, they have persevered in the course thus taken, and thereby given rise to the changes now occurring in Germany. To this they added, that any attempt to force them to renounce these principles would be made in vain: that it would be equally so to endeavour to convince them of error; for that they would yield only to proofs from Scripture; and that the corruptions of the Roman church were notorious to all the world, and acknowledged, in great measure, by its own popes and bishops. They, therefore, besought his imperial majesty to consider, that, should they even endeavour to establish the edict of Worms among their subjects, the experiment could only lead to the most deplorable results; for that the people were now too enlightened to be brought back to popery; and that consequently, if he still insisted on their enforcing this edict, and they were willing to execute his orders, it would be making them the butchers of their subjects.

The persons to whom the assembly intrusted this document, presented it to Charles at Placentia, in the month of May.* A promise was given that they should receive an immediate answer in writing. Nearly a month, however, passed over before the deputation heard any thing from his majesty. The reply which he then sent merely intimated, that he had heard of the proceedings at Spire, and was much afflicted at the dis-

* Seckendorf.

orders which prevailed: that the decree passed by the diet met his approbation, as being well calculated to subdue the progress of the errors which disturbed the peace of the empire: that the elector of Saxony, and the other protestant princes, were bound to submit to its enactments: that like them he desired to see a general council assembled, but did not think it absolutely necessary, as the provisions of the edict of Worms might serve for the remedy of present evils: that obedience ought always to be paid to resolutions passed by the majority in assemblies, which would otherwise meet in vain; and that he had already written to the elector and the princes of his party, requiring them, by their allegiance, to obey the decree of the last diet: to this he added, that in case they continued to resist his order, he was resolved and prepared to make an example.

It was with some difficulty that the deputies escaped the effects of the emperor's indignation on their presenting the appeal with which they had been charged by their masters. Little good, therefore, was accomplished by this proceeding of the princes, so far as their connection with the emperor was concerned. But it had the effect of hastening their preparations for self-defence. They had always mistrusted the success of any appeal to Charles; and knowing that their sole hope of safety must depend upon their resolution and promptness of action, they continued to hold meetings at Nuremberg and other places, for the purpose of forming a confederacy, which might be ready for action whenever the signal was given.

But an unexpected difficulty arose in the endeavour to establish a league between the protestant chiefs. The landgrave of Hesse was not only inclined to favour the opinions of Zuingli, because of their apparent truth, but clearly saw the importance of their joining his party in any measures of defence. To this union Luther was opposed, even though pleaded for only on political grounds. He therefore addressed the elector on the subject, and strongly dissuaded him from forming an alliance with those who erred in a capital article of

faith. To prove the danger of such a union, he quoted, as examples, the defeat of the Israelites because of the sin of Achan, and the fate of Arius, who, erring but in one point, was rejected by the church. He further added, that the Sacramentarians were evidently not convinced of the truth of their own doctrine, for that, otherwise, they would not have so earnestly sought a conference on the subject; an argument which neither Luther nor any other man could venture to employ except when blinded either by prejudice or arrogance. The conclusion of the address is equally unfavourable to the credit of Luther at this juncture. He there exhorts the princes to write to the emperor without delay, to separate themselves from the Zuinglians, and to state not only what abuses they had abolished, but what they had done to repress the Sacramentarians, the violators of churches, and all others who opposed themselves to orthodox doctrine.

The respect which the elector entertained for Luther, added to his own fear of the consequences of resisting the emperor, induced him to pause before joining the proposed league. Philip, in the mean time, suffered all the anxiety of an ardent mind, and employed the most urgent entreaties to subdue the obstinacy of Luther, and the apprehensions of his master: but he argued in vain; nor did the conference which had been brought about through his mediation tend to lessen the difficulties. Luther spoke with as much disgust and haughtiness as ever on what he was pleased to term the heresy and impiety of Zuingle.

Armed with all the arguments and uncharitable prejudices of Luther, and influenced, as he had always been, by a strong sense of his obligations to the emperor, the elector attended the meeting of the protestants at Smalcalde, ill inclined to confirm the sentiments which generally prevailed. As soon as the deliberations commenced, he presented a paper containing seventeen articles of faith; and openly declared, that neither he nor those with whom he was immediately connected,

would account themselves the allies of any who refused to sign that instrument.

So unexpected a proposition excited the greatest surprise in most of the persons present. The deputies from Strasburg and Ulm at once arose, and declared that they had been sent in the hope that a league was about to be formed for the common defence of those who contended for common rights; that they had no authority whatever to sign articles of faith; and that it seemed to them highly inexpedient to commence a theological debate, when circumstances so strongly demanded immediate preparations for action.

The arguments thus advanced were taken up by the deputies of other cities, those only from Nuremberg assenting to the opinions of the elector. But no persuasions could induce him to swerve from a resolution which both conscience and a notion of expediency seemed to establish. The assembly was, therefore, broken up; and, though another meeting was appointed to take place at Nuremberg early in January, the landgrave, and most of the other princes, as well as the deputies who were present, expressed themselves as greatly disappointed at the conduct of the elector.

A. D. 1530. So little expectation was entertained that any good would result from the proposed meeting at Nuremberg, that only a small proportion of the deputies assembled at Smalcalde could be brought together. The articles set forth by the elector could only be signed by Lutherans; whereas many of the most powerful of the protestant communities were every day becoming more attached to the sentiments of Zuingli. This was especially the case with the people of Strasburg, who had proved the sincerity of their professions, and their willing devotion to the protestant cause, by a course of conduct as bold as it was upright. The conduct of Luther had cut off all hope of union; their desire to share in the approaching struggle as brethren was treated with haughty disdain; and they were thereby left in a state of equal uncertainty and danger. Ferdinand, and the ministers of the emperor, at Spire, had treated

their deputies in a manner which foreboded the quick approach of a storm. To meet this they had now only their own fortitude on which to depend; and it was, therefore, necessary that they should either prepare to become unresisting sacrifices to the vengeance of the emperor, or provide themselves with additional force to resist his attacks. In this state of things, they naturally turned towards the reformed cantons of Switzerland; and on the same day that the other protestants assembled at Nuremberg, they concluded a treaty for fifteen years with Zurich and Basle.

In the midst of these agitations and disputes, the victorious Solymán was carrying on the war with resistless energy. Already had he made himself master of the provinces which so long attracted the cupidity of Christian princes; and, to the terror of all Europe, Vienna itself soon after saw him at her gates. Divine providence thus taught a lesson which the potentates of Christendom might have studied with advantage both to themselves and their subjects. They might have learnt therefrom, that no power or dignity is safe where there is not union; and that the best policy is that which invades no right, abuses no principle of conscience, but establishes all things on the basis of truth and justice which the whole mass of mankind must sooner or later acknowledge to be divine. Had Charles not involved the states of Germany in the worst kind of perplexity by his opposition to reform; had he acted with the candour becoming a prince, and, instead of temporising with the pope and his narrow-minded counsellors, listened to the manly demands of his people, Europe would never have suffered the disgrace of beholding in her western territories the proud armament of a Turkish sultan. Happily for the world, the same power which had allowed the flood to burst its proper barriers drove back its waves, and time was again given for the reformers on the one hand, and the Romanists and imperialists on the other, to pursue their respective designs with unabridged resolution.

CHAP. IX.

CHARLES V. AT BOLOGNA. — CONFERENCE WITH THE POPE. —
DIET OF AUGSBURG. — PROCEEDINGS THERE. — PROTESTANT
CONFESSION. — DISPUTES. — LUTHER AND MELANCTHON. —
LENGTHENED DISCUSSIONS. — CLOSE OF THE DIET.

A. D. 1530. CHARLES had devoted much reflection to the reports which he received from Germany; and, though averse to concession, was not unwilling to allow that they required him to view affairs in a different spirit to that of the papal court. He had visited Italy for the purpose of receiving coronation from the hands of the pontiff; but he lost no opportunity of intimating his anxiety to quiet the troubles in Germany, and provide for the future peace and tranquillity of the church. Clement would gladly have avoided this subject, every discourse of the emperor tending to prove the necessity of a general council. The expediency of such a measure had been advocated by the wise and moderate of the catholic party, as well as by the protestants. It would be unjust to conclude that, because those who loved to embroil themselves in public affairs were for the most part intemperate and bigotted, there were no reflective minds in the back-ground, to soften, by their secret influence, the turbulence of these zealots. In most cases of violent religious excitement, we see only the least amiable specimens of the two parties. The busy and ambitious come forth to make their profession of faith, as they would to join in the clamour of political faction. Others, more deeply sensible of the importance of the truth, keep back, anxious only to see its interests supported in the same spirit as that from which it flowed. Men of this character may always be found on both sides when Christians are divided by

controversy. There is ample evidence to prove that such was the case at the period of which we are speaking; and how much good would have been done then, and would still be done, could each party be persuaded to consider, that behind the ranks of their immediate assailants are large numbers of men who have no desire but for the general good!

The principal adviser of the emperor, at this period, was his chancellor, Gattinara, a man of good sense, piety, and firmness. Though attached to the church of Rome, he did not consider that it was necessary to uphold its interests by blindly favouring the ambitious views of the clergy. He regarded, therefore, the calling of a council as the most legitimate method of settling the present disorders. The objections to such a proceeding were not grounded on reasons which had any proper connection with the faith of a catholic. They sprang simply from the fears of the pontiff and his corrupt court, and could only be supported on the principle, that what is asserted to be most sacred must be least exposed to the light of day.

Soon after the emperor's arrival in Bologna, the pontiff, attended by the cardinals and different officers of his court, met him in solemn council for the purpose of receiving his opinions on these important points. The consultation was opened by Gattinara, who began his discourse by stating how much affliction had been caused the emperor by the religious dissensions in Germany; and which, he said, were so far from being on the decrease, that they gathered strength from day to day, and seemed to defy every measure employed for their suppression. Such a state of things could not but lead to consequences destructive to the church and empire; and it was, therefore, the duty of all good men to consider whether any means could be still suggested for restoring tranquillity. "But to you, holy father," continued the chancellor*, "to you belong the right and

* The speeches from which these passages are taken are given at length in the "*Sämtliche Schriften*," t. xvi. p. 77k, and by Beausobre. The au-

the care of watching over whatever pertains to the doctrine or the discipline of the church: it is in your authority, in your counsels and fidelity, we must seek a remedy for these calamities. Without you, we can take neither wise nor efficient resolutions; and language fails me to express the joy which his majesty experiences in thus being able to seek your advice and guidance. He is chief of the empire; you are the head of the church; and he doubts not but that you share his anxiety for the restoration of peace and the glory of God. But, to attain this great object of our desires, one way only is open: it is to preserve the doctrine and the worship of the church in purity; to clear it of whatever may have tended to injure its celestial holiness; to revive the strictness of discipline, if it have been neglected; to correct the manners of the people and clergy, if they are corrupt. Above all things it is necessary, according to the wise judgment of the emperor, that a system of Christian doctrine should be set forth, which, drawn immediately from the word of God, may be given to both learned and unlearned as a rule of faith. This is the only method whereby peace can be restored to the church. His majesty, therefore, has resolved to refrain from violence; which, while it would increase the present confusion, would, at the same time, bring down the indignation of God upon the people and their princes. He has, moreover, carefully consulted on the subject many persons of wisdom and probity; and the conclusion to which he has come, as well through their advice as his own wisdom, is, that no remedy can be employed more salutary or more worthy the dignity of the pontiff and a Christian emperor, than the calling of a free and general council, in which the controverted points may be fairly decided according to the word of God. It is his wish that the most learned and pious divines of all nations should be summoned to attend; that they should

thority on which their authenticity depends is Cæstlin, t. iii. p. 78. See also Seckendorf, lib. ii. sec. xix. p. 115. This author contends for the truth of Cæstlin's report, on the strength of the other parts of his narrative not being impugned by Mambourg.

have full liberty to declare their sentiments; that they should confer together as friends and brothers, who seek only the truth, and the glory of their heavenly master; that this examination having been made, they should transmit their opinions and reasons therefor to your holiness, or to such judges as may be deemed worthy, by their learning and integrity, of such a charge; that these judges, having approved what is according to Scripture, should draw up articles to be universally received; that they should condemn the opposite errors, oblige those who hold them to retract, and, if they refuse, deliver them to the magistrate: this, however, being always kept in memory, that the emperor desires above all things that the rule of charity be preserved inviolate." — "Be assured, holy father," continued the chancellor, "that his majesty has no wish to load you with fresh burthens: he knows that you are sufficiently oppressed already; and it is love for religion and the glory of God which alone prompts him to urge this measure. It is true, the example of his glorious predecessors encourages him in his course; for he remembers that the great Constantine assembled a council to condemn the errors of Arius; that Theodosius and Valentinian also assembled councils; that they were present in person; that they condemned the errors which had arisen, and punished their authors. These are the examples which he desires to follow; and he doubts not, holy father, but that you will lend a favourable ear to his wishes, or rather to the counsels, to the vows and the sighs of the multitude of pious souls who now entreat your aid."

"I am persuaded," said the pontiff, turning towards Charles as he took up the discourse, "that you are full of zeal for religion; and, in desiring to see a council assembled, do so from the holiest motives. But it is for me to propose measures when the question concerns the church, of which I am the head. Not to dispute here concerning my rights, it is certain that the council

of Nice directed that all controversies agitated in the West should be judged by the bishop of Rome, and that he should have the power of assembling councils. I have, for my own part, long considered whether it would be better to call a council, and there examine the points of the controversy; or whether, leaving so uncertain and remote a remedy, it would not be better to crush at once by arms these modern heretics, who have the boldness to resist decrees and reject principles received in all ages and by the universal church. Let it not be thought that I here regard my own interests. John XXIII., it is said, repented having called the council of Constance, because it deposed him. For myself, I have experienced every reverse of fortune: I have but just returned from captivity; and I regard all honours, power, life itself, as a shadow which passes away, and am ready at any moment to quit the post which I occupy, by whatever unforeseen event divine providence may be pleased to remove me. And, as I value not the riches of the Roman church, so have I no inquietude respecting them: they were bestowed upon it for the necessary expenses of its government, and as a means of protection. But would that it pleased God to free the bishop of Rome from all this useless and burthensome parade of earthly splendour; for what need could there be for it, were there always such emperors as you?"

The pontiff then proceeded to consider the expediency of calling a council. His great argument against the measure was founded on the assertion, that it could produce no benefit. This position he endeavoured to establish by showing, that such absurd doctrines as those of the anabaptists ought to be put down by main force; that the second class of doctrines, as those which related to transubstantiation and the sacrifice of the mass, were altogether inexplicable; and that, as they must always tend to create disputes, it was, therefore, better to prohibit their being examined. With respect to such matters as those rites and usages which the

pope could, by his own power, set aside, it was manifestly useless, he said, to examine them in a council; since, if the princes expressed a wish to that effect, he would himself abolish them by a decree. "Thus," concluded he, "a council would have to do only with doctrine; and all doctrines belonging to one or the other of the three classes I have mentioned, it is silent that this council would be useless, and that the only means of tranquillising the church is authority and force. You have given peace to Italy by your victories. The king of France, who disputed with you, not on questions of philosophy or monkish superstitions, but for the empire of Europe, he has yielded to you. And will it not be infinitely easier to put down a contemptible faction in Germany, which defies you and the church, than it was to overcome such enemies as these? Consider well, I beseech you, the interests of posterity. If once the authority of the Holy See is abolished, the world will soon fall into anarchy; discipline will be destroyed; the manners of men will become barbarous; and bold and intemperate spirits will every day give birth to new and fatal heresies. Remember that nothing is more dangerous than delay, when once the conflagration is begun."

By the direction of the emperor, Gattinara again rose, and was proceeding to reply to the pontiff's address, when his holiness suddenly stopped him by exclaiming, "What! do you dare to contradict me, and to incite your master against me?" A less virtuous and enlightened man than Gattinara would have been abashed at this violent interruption, and implied threat; but he calmly replied, that he spoke according to the wishes of his sovereign, and by his desire alone; but that, if he declared his own sentiments, he must proclaim that they were the same as those which he had delivered in the name of the emperor. "I acknowledge," he said, "that I exhort him to persevere in these opinions, because it is of supreme importance that learned and holy men should be called together, and allowed to

examine the present affairs of the church." The emperor himself here suddenly interrupted his minister, and thus addressed the pontiff, the assembly listening in profound silence to the words of the august speaker. "I am still young," he said, "and have not the advantage of your experience; for this reason I take advantage of Gattinara's counsels, and glory in seeking wisdom from any one by whom it is possessed. I know that I ought to yield to those who have more light and experience than myself; and this is why, in an affair which so closely regards the honour of God, and the salvation of souls, I have sought the advice of men celebrated for their virtue, their prudence, and their piety. And all whom I have thus consulted, agree in stating, that they consider the church has need of a general council. You cannot yourself be ignorant of the earnest desires, of the deep sighs, with which all the best and wisest men in Europe look for the assembling of a council, where liberty may reign, and truth decide whatever is discussed."

To this powerful appeal the emperor still further added, "I have thought too much on the subject of a general council, not to have foreseen the objections which you have urged against such a measure. But I declare to you that I agree with whatever Gattinara has said; and I believe both his reasonings and my intentions to be so just, that I hope never to depart from either. In respect to your own reasonings, they are specious, and will appear plausible to the thoughtless and profane; mine, however, are the only ones which can heal the disorders of the church. You say that it is not necessary or wise to examine doctrines in themselves absurd. This bears not on the question; for many of those now advanced are by no means absurd, nor is there any doctrine, necessary to salvation, the truth and certainty of which are impenetrable. There are, moreover, corruptions in the church which ought not to be tolerated. Superstitions, offensive to the majesty of God, have been introduced into the public worship; and

what efforts ought not to be made to remedy these evils? But it is not for such objects alone that a council is required. You must be aware that there exist differences on important points ~~even~~ among those who own your authority. And if absurdities are mingled with the new opinions, what harm can follow from refuting them by clear and evident reasons? You say that some doctrines are inexplicable. I confess that this proposition appears to me both false, and unworthy the profession of a sovereign pontiff. God is infinitely good, and he desires us to believe his Gospel; but how can we do this, if an impenetrable obscurity clouds his revelations? I follow the advice of Theodosius*, who directed that the primitive doctrines of the church should be carefully expounded when he desired to examine the controversies of his age; for I am persuaded that it is only by returning to the earliest times that we can discover what ought to be our present rule of practice."

The emperor then alluded to the pontiff's offer of reforming certain alleged superstitions by his own authority, but that, said the sovereign, which regards all nations, can be much more satisfactorily settled by the united representatives of all. In concluding, he is reported to have passed this noble censure on that part of Clement's speech which referred to putting down the reformation by arms. "You advise me to terminate these disputes by arms, and without examination: but can you expect me to follow such counsels? To take steps which would expose me to the danger of destroying the good with the bad, and to act as if I could no longer discern between right and wrong? No! I desire not to support tyranny in the church: I have no wish to deprive the accused parties of the means of defending themselves,

* Charles was probably fond of alluding to the example of Theodosius, as, like himself, of Spanish origin. Melancthon made a point of this in his eulogistic treatise "De Elect. et Coron." can. v. 1:—"Memini Rex Carolus, ex hac ipsa Hispania duos principes ad imperium vocatos esse, Trajanum et Theodosium: quorum alter optimus appellatus est: alter non solum bonitate et armis Trajano par fuit, sed etiam hac laude excelluit, quod vere Deum coluit, ac percipit, ut evangelium latius propagaretur; et concordiam ecclesie, pie, disceptatissimis, constituit . . . letatur enim."

— *Op. Melanc.* pars v. p. 742.

or their judges of knowledge and equity. What I now advance is not spoken from enmity to the church of Rome. I have sufficiently proved my attachment to it in the late war, nor will I fail to evince the same in the time to come."

Supposing these several speeches to have been correctly reported, they afford a remarkable illustration of the principles which governed the church at this period, and a not less curious proof of the vacillation and uncertainty which characterised Charles V. in respect to matters of religion. Time effected nothing for the reformation in the papal court. It could burst none of those adamantine fetters with which truth and charity lay bound beneath the high altar of superstition. The longer this prostration of the guardian angels of humanity was contemplated, the more convinced did the pope seem to become that it was their natural condition, and that they ought never to be loosed except at his express orders, which no pope could resolve to give for such a purpose, lest, once loosed, these objects of their oppression should never again suffer themselves to be bound.

That Clement should have advised the employment of force in preference to the milder methods of conciliation is not extraordinary. The protestants were convicted of heresy; and heresy had always been considered, not as a disease to be viewed with compassion, but as a crime to be punished by the sword. Luther himself spoke of those who dissented from him, in terms which manifested almost as much ignorance of the true nature of religious freedom as appears in the denunciations of the popes. This lamentable error continued to infect the minds of men to a late period of the reformation, and it was not till after civil freedom had greatly increased, that Christian liberty could assert its rights in safety.

The sentiments of the emperor were such as might be looked for from a monarch anxious to pursue the course which moderation and enlarged views pointed out. But his conduct was very imperfectly in accord-

ance with his counsels ; nor does he appear, even in them, to have emancipated himself from the notion that the sword of the magistrate was the last appeal from heresy to truth. If the above address be authentic, he seems to have wished to transfer the power of the pope to a temporary assembly, whose conclusions should give a permanent and universally coercive law. Were any found who could not agree to its rule of faith, they were to be given up to the civil authorities, and punished accordingly. Religion could have gained little by such a course. The pope was right in supposing that interminable debates would be the probable consequence of such an assembly. This must have been the case, not only in the meeting itself, but in every part of Europe ; for the minds of all men, naturally directed with intense anxiety towards the horizon, whence their creed was to arise in new and perfect lustre, would have made the subject a matter of common debate, and acquired invincible habits of religious controversy. Now, when after this the council had come to a conclusion on the points in debate, and had sent forth the formulary of faith, which was to be binding on all, is it to be supposed that that dictum of the dispersed body would at once silence the voice of inquiry, or the busy tongues of those who had sent their several representatives to the assembly ; and several of whom, it is highly probable, would have returned but little satisfied with the results of the debate ?

The speech of the emperor is said to have surprised the pope, and to have made a deep impression on the minds of all present. But Clement was a keener politician than the sovereign ; and refraining from any immediate attempt to press his own opinions or wishes, he mildly observed, that he would take his majesty's view of the subject into more careful consideration. As Charles remained at the court of the pontiff some weeks longer, the latter had ample opportunities of representing his wishes with all the persuasive ingenuity which natural skill and great experience had taught him to

practise. The emperor was not proof against such attacks, and at last consented to resign, for the present, his intention to demand the calling of a council. In the mean time, however, he sent orders into Germany to summon an assembly of the diet of the empire to meet at Augsburg in the ensuing month of April. The directions for this purpose expressly stated, that the meeting was called in order that the subject of religion might be carefully considered, and the different parties heard with every kind of indulgence and charity: that the reasons of each might be considered, and such conclusions drawn from the examination as should lead to the correction of what was erroneous, and the re-establishment of peace and unity.

Clement, it is said, endeavoured to dissuade the emperor from even this partial execution of his original wishes. But he found that the powers of persuasion were limited; nor would he, it is probable, have succeeded so far as he did, had it not been for the circumstance that the coronation was at hand,—a ceremony which Charles was anxious to undergo, and the expectation of which, therefore, may be supposed to have considerably influenced his feelings. Believing that his crown could only come properly consecrated from the hands of the pope, he might be little inclined to dispute on matters which would admit of modification.

The ceremony of the coronation took place on the 24th of February; and the emperor prolonging his stay at Bologna, letters were sent into Germany deferring the meeting of the diet to the month of May.* This lengthened sojourn of the emperor at the papal court inspired the reformers with the worst suspicions. They knew the character of Charles, and the course of his policy. Neither the one nor the other had afforded confidence, and every day added to the anxiety with which they looked forward to his arrival. So fearful, indeed, were the protestant chiefs that evil had been plotted against them, that it was seriously debated

* Seckendorf. Sleidan.

whether the elector of Saxony ought to trust himself to the justice either of the diet, or the emperor.

At length the day approached for the meeting of this celebrated assembly ; and the elector, having decided as became the dignity of a free prince, set out on his way to Augsburg. He was accompanied by a splendid retinue of nobles and their respective trains of attendants. Luther only, of the distinguished divines of Wittemberg, remained behind. He stopped on the way, at the castle of Cobourg. This he was induced to do by the advice of the senate of Nuremberg, which represented the danger he must incur by exposing himself to his enemies without a safe-conduct, and the inexpediency of provoking the emperor by making a demand for his protection.

The landgrave and other protestant princes followed the example of the elector of Saxony, and entered Augsburg with corresponding splendour. Some weeks passed away before the emperor arrived. During this interval, which he spent in the Tyrol and Bavaria, the champions of the pope continually pressed him with their exhortations to defend the interests of the church, and put down a party which had so little regard for the laws and established authority as the protestants. The influence which these perpetual appeals exercised on his mind, produced many evil consequences to the reformers ; and when Dolzig, the ambassador of the elector, appeared before him to justify the late proceedings of his master, he manifested, both by words and looks, how resolved he was to employ his authority against the supposed invaders of ancient right. He reached Augsburg on the evening of the 5th of June, the next day being the feast of the sacrament. No circumstance had been neglected which could add to the magnificence of his entry. Princes, nobles, and bishops crowded to meet him ; and he was saluted with a homage which proclaimed that none of the associations belonging to imperial renown and titles had yet passed away. As the cavalcades approached, the

princes and the emperor descended from their horses, and saluted each other with every mark of affection and respect. The pope's legate then proceeded to give the blessing, and the assembled multitude fell on their knees, the only persons left standing being the elector and his friends.

No time was lost in opening the all-important subject, the discussion of which had been looked for with such intense anxiety. The emperor, having heard service at the cathedral, was scarcely within the walls of the bishop's palace, when he put the protestant princes to a trial of obedience. "You will attend the procession of the holy sacrament to-morrow, and silence your preachers," was the substance of his message conveyed to them by Ferdinand. Not altogether unprepared for this address, they at once answered that they could do neither the one nor the other; and when Ferdinand let fall some angry expressions, George of Brandenburg replied, that he would rather suffer death than renounce his principles, or engage in a worship that was idolatrous. The emperor, who had not left the apartment, mildly observed, on hearing this, "that the life of no one was wanted;" which remark he repeated, as if he either suspected the timeliness of the prince's declaration, or the sincerity of his own.*

So resolved did Charles appear to bring the question to an immediate issue, that he sent to the elector of Saxony, when it was near midnight, to obtain his final answer. The latter informed the messenger that he was preparing for repose, but would acquaint the emperor with his decision in the morning. At an early hour, he and the other protestant princes sought an audience in the episcopal palace. They then informed his majesty of the resolution which had been finally taken, and stated the principal arguments on which it was founded. Charles could neither terrify nor persuade them into compliance, and the conference terminated with his desiring them to give their reasons in writing

* Fleury, art. v. sec. xxii. Beausobre, Seckendorf

for not agreeing to silence the preachers of their party.

This request of the emperor having been complied with, they were again summoned to his presence ; and it being agreed that commissioners should have the decision of the subject, it was finally settled that, if the protestants would prevent their ministers from preaching in Augsburg, the catholic princes would silence also the most controversial and obnoxious of their own. But no sooner was this affair settled, than the legate of the pope invented another cause of dispute. " Who were to assist at the mass on the opening of the diet ? " it was asked. " Could the elector of Saxony, grand marshal of the empire, refuse to attend when the sovereign demanded his presence ? " The design of the legate, however, was again defeated, for the protestant ministers and princes agreed that, under such circumstances, the elector might conscientiously obey the summons of the emperor, and be present at the ceremony. He attended, therefore, as required ; as did also George of Brandenburg ; but neither of them carried their complaisance so far as to join in those parts of the worship which they accounted idolatrous.

The states of Germany had never been more nobly represented than they were at the opening of this diet. Charles, the sovereign of the empire, took his seat on the throne, with a reputation and a glory of which the greatest of his ancestors might have been proud. Europe at large owned the power of his sword or of his influence. England was the only country which had not trembled at the progress of his arms. Attendant on this mighty monarch were the choicest representatives of the church : the princely bishops, the subtle and eloquent theologians, and the pope's legate charged with all the authority and the weighty counsels of the pontifical court. Besides these, there were the numerous princes, with the king of the Romans at their head, who thronged to the diet, eagerly desiring to engage on the side of the emperor, whatever might be the pro-

jects he should see fit to undertake. Ranged on the other side, were the venerable elector of Saxony, the brave landgrave of Hesse, the learned and ardent marquis of Brandenburg, and the deputies of cities which, in the true spirit of wealthy and free communities, had been among the first opponents of superstition and tyranny.

The business of the meeting was opened by Frederic count palatine, who made a short apology for the delay of the emperor, and explained the reasons which had induced him to assemble the diet. In the usual written address of the sovereign, which was next read, Charles also offered a formal excuse for his long absence from Germany, pleading, as his principle reason, the necessity created by war, and his firm trust in the loyalty of the states. After alluding to the advance of the Turks, he explained what efforts he had made to provide for the defence of the empire. He had offered, he said, all the money set apart for his coronation at Rome, and was still willing to make every sacrifice that could be expected of a sovereign devoted to the interests of his people. The same should be expected, he added, from his brother Ferdinand, who ought to be regarded, standing where he did, as the bulwark of Christendom, and from Germany itself, so exposed as it was to the fury of the infidels.

When the emperor had thus glanced at the various political topics of the day, he commenced, in an earnest tone, the consideration of those subjects on which the minds of all present, princes as well as ecclesiastics, were more intently fixed. "He had called *," he said, "at a very early period of his reign, the diet of Worms, and the states had then passed an edict which, if obeyed, would have effectually prevented those evils under which they were now suffering. But every measure," he added, "has proved ineffectual to stop the progress of disorder. We have, therefore, summoned this assembly, to consider further what means may be adopted to restore tranquillity; and we desire that you will freely

* Sleidan, t. i. liv. vii. Seckendorf.

deliver your sentiments on those important subjects which are about to be discussed."

It was agreed, on all sides, that the affairs of religion should precede whatever else had to be considered. On the 24th of the month, therefore, the day appointed for the second session of the diet, the emperor entered the hall at an early hour of the morning. The principal members of the council having assembled around him, he proceeded to the head of the staircase to meet the legate, whom he led back to the apartment, and seated on the chair of state, which on the former occasion had been occupied by Ferdinand.

Campegio addressed the diet in a Latin oration of considerable length ; but did not venture to touch upon the subject of religion, except in that general style which declaimers love, because, being too indefinite to leave any trace of the argument, it is thereby rendered impossible for their antagonists to pursue them. The protestants saw clearly that every effort was made to delay the introduction of the questions which they expected to be brought forward at this session. But the necessities of the empire obliged the sovereign to seek their aid ; and on being applied to for advice and succours, the princes rose from their seats, and remained standing while the venerable Pontanus, who had long exercised the office of chancellor to the elector, briefly intimated their sentiments, their grievances, and their determinations.

In reply to the request with which Pontanus ended his address, and the object of which was to obtain permission for the protestants to read their apology before the assembly, Charles made answer, that if they would send it to the proper office, it should be read. As this reply was partly expected, the princes renewed their application, pressing their claims to be heard as a matter of right and justice. The emperor saw, at length, that opposition was of no avail ; and, notwithstanding the persuasions of the catholics and his brother Ferdinand,

he promised to grant them the desired hearing the next day.

At three o'clock in the afternoon of the following day, the members of the diet again assembled; but the present meeting was held in the apartment where mass had been said, and not in the grand hall of the palace of Augsburg, the usual place of meeting. To Pontanus again belonged the office of pleading the cause of the protestants. As he prepared to commence his address, the princes rose as before, and would have continued standing had not the emperor insisted on their resuming their seats. The ex-chancellor then came forward, accompanied by Christopher Beyer, his successor in the office. He bore in his hands a Latin and a German copy of the confession of faith. This instrument, enlarged by Melancthon, had for its basis articles drawn up by Luther, and delivered to the elector at Torgau, where it was accepted by the reformers for the purpose of being presented to this assembly as their apology. Charles, still acting in conformity with the suggestion of his catholic advisers, desired that the Latin only should be read; to which the elector of Saxony replied, that he trusted they might be allowed to use their own language when speaking among their own countrymen.

Permission being given to proceed, Christopher Beyer, with a loud and distinct voice, began the reading of the confession. It was suspected that the place of assembly had been changed to prevent the concourse of persons being present who were able to find an entrance into the more spacious hall. But so clear and sonorous were the tones of the chancellor's voice, that they are said to have been distinguished far beyond the limits within which it was intended to confine the hearing of the confession. So profound was the ignorance which prevailed on the subject of protestantism, that, as he continued, several of the members of the diet expressed their surprise at finding the doctrines of the Lutherans not worthy of utter reprobation and contempt. The

bishop of Augsburg himself suddenly exclaimed, "This is pure truth. We cannot deny it!" A similar remark was made by William of Bavaria, who, having hitherto treated the elector of Saxony with marked dislike, now turned towards him, and acknowledged that he had erred in attributing doctrines to the protestants so different to those which formed their confession of faith.

The reading of the confession occupied two hours. At the conclusion, Pontanus placed the Latin as well as the German copy in the hands of the emperor's secretary, saying, as he presented them, "By the grace of God, who will defend his own cause, this confession shall prevail against the gates of hell." The emperor received the copy written in Latin, and, dissolving the assembly, desired the count palatine to inform the protestants that he would take their writing into consideration.

An important point had now been carried by the reformers. Their confession of faith was clear and definite; it had been pronounced before the highest tribunal of the country, and but one alternative remained to their opponents—that, namely, of proving their creed false, or still upholding the maxim that a unity, of which the bond is error and superstition, is preferable to schism, though it have truth necessitating and producing it.

The confession of Augsburg afforded a new instance of the candour and honesty of the protestants. It has been remarked, that the church of Rome had ever avoided publishing any formal account of its doctrines.* We doubt whether the remark, as an argument against the church of Rome, is fair or judicious. The principles and dogmas of that church were for many ages too universally and implicitly received to allow of any seeming necessity for the publication of a creed distinct

* It is Basnage who makes this observation:—"The church of Rome," he says, "has never dared to make a confession of faith, because, changing its dogmas every instant, and never being sure of its principles, a detail of its doctrines would afford too good a means for discovering its innovations. It refers, therefore, to the acts of councils, the inconstancy of which are less visible to the people, who have few opportunities for reading or comparing these memorials."—*Hist. de l'Eglise*, liv. xxvi. c. ii. p. 1512.

from those which had the sanction of antiquity. There can be no necessity for a confession of faith, where, ample means of another kind existing for the explication of doctrine, the people assent at large to the faith in which they have been educated. We know not at what period the church of Rome could have considered itself properly called upon to come forward with a declaration of its principles by any public instrument, like the confession required of a body but newly constituted, and whose declarations were needed both as a symbol of union among themselves, and a defence against powerful enemies. But though it does not appear that the Roman church was bound to publish such confessions of faith as that of Augs-burg, it reflects great honour on the wisdom and noble candour of the protestants, that they thus early came forward with so clear an account of their principles and belief. They proved thereby that they were not contending for a shadow; for opinions ill defined, and only loosely apprehended: they demonstrated that no feverish dream of enthusiasm had led them to desire liberty of conscience; that they had taken time to meditate and examine; that they did not seek to avoid the scrutinising eye of their opponents, or the judgment of the world at large,—proofs of sincerity and honesty of profession which ought, even alone, to have secured them an honourable regard and attention.

As the confession referred both to points of faith, properly so called, and to matters of ceremony and discipline, it was divided into two parts. The former of these consisted of twenty-one articles on the principle heads of Christian belief. They are thus given in abstract*: — “I. The first four general councils are acknowledged to have decided according to Scripture, on the doctrine of the Trinity. II. Original sin is recognised, and said to consist altogether in concupiscence, and in want of belief in God and faith in his goodness. III. The Apostles’ Creed is received, and that which it teaches respecting the incarnation, the life, death,

* Sleidan. Seckendorf. Beausobre

passion, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus Christ. IV. The Pelagians are refuted on the subject of justification by our own works; the true doctrine of the Gospel being that we are justified by faith only, and not by good works. V. The Holy Ghost is given by means of the sacraments, but his operations depend on faith alone. VI. This faith properly produces good works, but not as justifying us thereby, — good works being only proofs of our willing obedience to God. VII. The church, rightly considered, consists entirely of the elect. VIII. The sacraments are efficacious, whatever may be the character of the officiating minister. IX. The anabaptists err in refusing baptism to infants. X. The true body and blood of Christ are really present, distributed, and received in the Lord's supper under the form of the bread and wine. XI. It is necessary to retain confession in the church, but it is not required that a minute enumeration of sins should be made. XII. Penitence is described as consisting of contrition and faith, or the persuasion that our sins are pardoned for the sake of Christ; and there is no true repentance, it is added, without good works. XIII. The sacraments are not only signs whereby our profession of the Gospel is set forth, but witnesses of the love of God towards men, which serve to excite and establish faith. XIV. The pastors of the church should be called to their office by God. XV. Those ceremonies which contribute to order and decency should continue to be observed, but they ought not to be regarded as things necessary to men's salvation, as productive of grace, or satisfying God for sins. XVI. The authority of magistrates, their ordinances, and wars carried on for just purposes, are not contrary to the Gospel. XVII. There will be a judgment, in which all men will appear before the tribunal of Christ, and when the wicked will be doomed to everlasting punishment. XVIII. The strength of free-will may be sufficient to produce an outward show of virtue, and influence the manners of men in this

world ; but without the grace of the Holy Spirit there can be neither faith, nor regeneration, nor true justice. XIX. The corrupt will of man, and not God, is the sole cause of sin. XX. Good works are necessary and indispensable, but can never by their merit procure a remission of sins, which depends wholly on the merit of Jesus Christ, ascribed to us in consideration of faith, which, when sincere, fails not to produce good works. XXI. The example of the saints ought to be set before the people to excite them to holiness, but Scripture nowhere exhorts us to invoke them, and speaks only of one mediator between God and man—that is, Jesus Christ.”

The moderation and scriptural tone of these articles could only be disputed by the most determined opponents to fair inquiry. “Our confession,” said the reformers, “includes nothing but what may be proved by the word of God, or that contradicts the doctrines of the catholic, or even of the Roman church, as far as they are developed in the writings of its divines. It is without justice, therefore, that we are branded with the name of heretics. If any real foundation for dispute exists, it is derived from this—that we reject the abuses which have been introduced into the practices of the church. But, while we set aside such things as seem contrary to Christian simplicity, we retain the greater part of established rites ; nor have we done more in these changes than has been allowed by the general consent of believers in all ages ; no period being known in which the internal observances of the church have been universally the same.” *

A statement is next made of the abuses here referred to, and the correction of which the protestants claimed as the privilege of every church in Christendom. The second part of the confession is divided into six articles, ranged in the following order : — I. At the head of all stands that which refers to the denial of the cup to the laity, in the celebration of the Lord's supper. II. The

* Seekendorf. Sleidan. Beatusobre.

next article treats of the celibacy of the clergy, which it condemns as contrary to the freedom allowed by the divine law, and productive of great evils. III. In this the all-important subject of the mass is brought forward. And here, as in the case of the doctrine concerning the real presence, may be plainly traced the signs of a tender and cautious spirit, anxious to guard the truth, and, at the same time, avoid the danger of producing irritation by too pointed a reproof of those who still venerated the ancient rites. "We have not," says the confession, "abolished the mass; we celebrate it with the profoundest veneration; and have retained most of the accustomed usages. All that we have done is to add some German hymns to the Latin, for the sake of the people; and to require that those who wish to receive it should undergo a proper preparation before being admitted to communicate. For the rest, we have abolished the scandalous custom which prevailed of saying masses for the sake of money; a practice which was carried on to the most disgusting extent, and solely for the gain which it produced. This fruitful source of evils had its beginning in the scholastic dogma, that Jesus Christ expiated original sin only, and that the mass is celebrated for the remission of actual sins. Whereas the mass is not a sacrifice which can have any virtue in itself for the expiation of sins, unless the sinner performs the conditions required of him by the Gospel. IV. Under the next head, auricular confession is made the subject of remark. They did not require, said they, that that particular naming of each offence should take place, which had given occasion to many dangers and scandals, but they retained the ordinance of confession, and that of absolution by the minister, the efficacy of which depends on the faith of him who confesses his offences. V. This article refers to abstinence from certain meats, which custom had been abolished, they said, 1. Because the people had been led into the error of believing that the abstinence was meritorious, and could satisfy God for sins. 2. Be-

cause it had been represented as the highest exercise of a spiritual life, and as even more indispensable than obedience to the practical precepts of the Gospel. 3. Because the multiplication of ordinances was a burden to the tender conscience, which was thereby tormented with frequent and grievous scruples, to such an extent that according to Gerson several persons of this character had even destroyed themselves, in the despair of being ever able to perform all those external duties set forth as essential to salvation. VI. This article referred to monastic vows, which had been abolished as dangerous snares to the conscience, and the origin of many of those corruptions which produced the most demoralising effect on the members of the church. VII. The concluding article made mention of the power of the pope and the bishops. This power, it was said, had been enlarged beyond its proper bounds, and had gradually usurped the rights which belonged to kings and princes. They had desired, therefore, to see the evil corrected, that that which belonged to Cæsar might be rendered to Cæsar, while leaving that untouched, which justly pertained to the pope, the bishops, and the clergy at large." In endeavouring to give their views on the latter head, they argued, that ecclesiastical power, or the keys which Christ had given to his church, was nothing more than the right of preaching the Gospel, administering the sacraments, and pardoning, or refusing the pardon of, sins according as repentance was sincere or not. This being the true nature of ecclesiastical power, "it belonged not," they said, "to the pope or the bishops to depose princes, or interfere with the civil government of nations, but to perform such duties as properly pertained to their office, the conscientious execution of which was that alone which rightly entitled them to the veneration of their fellow men." *

* The learned editor of Mosheim has a long note on this confession, and is one of those who decide with least justice and charity respecting Melancthon's conduct. "To speak plain," says Dr. Markland, "Melancthon's love of peace and concord seems to have carried him beyond what he owed

Such is the substance of the confession on which the protestant faith was now raised, to be a barrier which should resist, for ever after, the returning tides of ignorance and superstition. That it breathed a less vigorous tone than might have been expected, is partly accounted for by the character of Melancthon. But too much weight should not be given to this circumstance. It was not Melancthon that conferred authority on it, but Luther. Nor had Luther only his own faith and feelings to consult, but the situation of his prince, of his country, and of his party. There was, moreover, some opposition of opinion among the protestants themselves. The landgrave of Hesse was strongly inclined to favour the Sacramentarians. To the same party were the deputies of many powerful towns attached; while, on the other hand, the divines of Wittenberg professed themselves so strongly devoted to the doctrine of the real presence, that little difference existed between their opinions on the subject, and those of the church of Rome. Now, it is to be remembered that Melancthon and Luther, when called upon to frame a confession of faith, were expected to frame it, not as their own confession merely, but as that of the whole body of protestants. It was not they alone who were about to be tried as to the degrees of heresy into which they had fallen, but the princes and the popular communities they had swayed by their learning and their piety. Accustomed to controversy, to the danger of opposing the power of popes and sovereigns, firm in

to the truth, in composing this defence of the confession of Augsburg. In the edition of that defence which some Lutherans look upon as the most genuine and authentic, Melancthon makes several strange concessions to the church of Rome; whether through servile fear, excessive charity, or hesitation of mind, I will not pretend to determine. He speaks of the presence of Christ's body in the eucharist in the very strongest terms that the Roman catholics use to express the monstrous doctrine of transubstantiation, and adopts those remarkable words of Theophylact, that *the bread was not a figure only, but was truly changed into flesh*. He approves of that canon of the mass, in which the priest prays that *the bread may be changed into the body of Christ*. It is true that, in some subsequent editions of the *Defence or Apology* now under consideration, these obnoxious passages were left out, and the phraseology that had given such just offence was considerably mitigated." — *Museum*, vol. iv. p. 283.

faith, and prepared to offer its sacrifices, they would doubtlessly have refused to compromise, for the sake of personal safety, a tittle of their belief. But they represented those whom they could scarcely expect to find sufficiently strong for such things; and it behoved them, therefore, to draw up the confession in such a manner that it might express the faith, and even the state of mind, of these their brethren.

The difficulties, therefore, which have been started respecting the seeming indefiniteness of some parts of this confession, admit of a probable solution, without resorting to the expedient of suspecting either Luther's or Melancthon's consistency. Had the confession of Augsburg been so drawn up as to render it difficult for the several members of their party to own it as their confession, the body must at once have lost its means of defence. Or had it, again, been so worded as to provoke the immediate attack of the emperor, or his papal advisers, the people would have had to encounter miseries which the zeal of their teachers would have been badly employed in provoking.

It is scarcely to be expected that a party possessed of power, which it strives to keep against the assaults of another, should easily yield to the conviction that its rival is just, reasonable, and temperate in principle. The more interested of the catholics afforded a striking illustration of this on the present occasion. Many of the party had yielded the applause which they deemed fairly due to the mild temper of the confession; but the pope's legate, with the celebrated controversialists, Faber and Eckius, the papal nuncios, and some of the princes, vehemently urged upon Charles, that he ought to lose no time in putting down the protestant faction by force of arms. They objected in the strongest manner they could to his even examining its claims to consideration; and followed, in all respects, the principles which had been laid down by the pontiff himself.

But Charles, though always attentive to the calls of expediency, had too much candour, and too enlightened

a mind, to yield to the arguments of such reasoners as those who now addressed him. Notwithstanding their persuasions, he continued to listen to the representations of the protestants; and it hence became necessary, that the most careful consideration should be given to the framing of the answer which was to meet their application. The difficulties were great, which opposed the ready solution of the question. Campegio himself refused to sanction the wish of the most ardent of his party, to undertake the confutation of the reformers. He urged, as a reason, that their doctrines were so little different from those of the church, that he could not, without danger, commence an argument which involved only subtle and scholastic distinctions. It was then advised that the confession should be submitted to unprejudiced examiners, whose decision might form the foundation of the emperor's judgment; or, that a general refutation should be drawn up, read to the protestants, and be immediately followed by the decision of the sovereign; which should oblige them either to submit, and retract their confession, or expect the punishment due to their wilfulness and heresy.

It was at length decided, that the confession should first be submitted to the examination of the catholic theologians. Those who were anxious for the speedy recovery of tranquillity, begged that neither Faber nor Eckius might be allowed to have a part in the consultation; but these appear to have been the only disputants on whose learning and ability the catholics could rely. They were, therefore, summoned to the task of refuting the confession; and, after six weeks' hard labour, the reply was ready.

While the advocates of the Roman church were preparing their address to the emperor, Melancthon, and the party which he represented, experienced much and painful anxiety. They needed the energetic spirit of Luther to support and guide them. Others might share his gifts of learning and eloquence—might be even superior to him in powers of acute reasoning, and in

command of temper — but none approached him in faith, in the graces of a true spiritual warrior, in the sense of right, privilege, and dignity, which enabled him to go before the world and its rulers as the consecrated champion of divine truth.

Depressed with care and fatigue, Melancthon trembled when he discovered the activity of their enemies, and saw how little the emperor was willing to decide at once according to the obvious justice of the case. In this situation, he wrote to Luther, unfolding the state of his mind, and seeking that support which his venerated friend seemed alone capable of giving. The appeal was not in vain: Luther, who had quietly resigned himself to the necessity of a temporary retirement, employed his time in the castle of Cobourg, between writing and study. He had already translated and composed commentaries on some of the most important portions of Scripture, and was now busied in the translation of the prophets; the book of Zechariah having lately appeared from the press. When wearied with these graver occupations, he turned to the Fables of *Æsop*, and rendered them into German, — the only society he had being that of his friend, Vitus Theodoric, the pastor of Nuremberg. From the letters of this excellent man we learn, not only how diligently, but how devoutly, Luther spent his time during this season of solitude. Not a day passed, it is said, but he expended three hours in earnest prayer; and though he appears to have suffered occasionally from a most intense melancholy — a nervous excitement of mind almost intolerable — he enjoyed, on the whole, great consolations; and seems to have experienced the continual increase of his faith and hope. In his answer to Melancthon he says*, “I am not afraid to acknowledge that I have endured greater agonies than you can form an idea of, or than I would willingly see suffered by those who so rage against us.” Then reminding him of the goodness of God, and paraphrasing the argument of the apostle, “He who

* Briefe, t. v. p. 62. Seckendorf, l. ii. s. xxxii. p. 181.

spared not his son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?" he adds, "In particular temptations I am feebler than you: on the contrary, in public trials you are as weak as I am in trials at home — if I may call by that name those to which Satan puts me. For you despise your own life, and tremble for the public cause; but for me, I regard with serenity and confidence the public cause, knowing that it is just, and that of Christ and of God. I tremble not for this, therefore, but I fear for myself, because I am a sinner. Thus I contemplate the events which are taking place in peace and security, nor feel any apprehensions at what you tell me respecting the efforts which the fierce and abusive catholics are making against us. If we perish, Jesus Christ will perish with us, and our church become that of the prince of this world; and when that happens, I shall think it better to perish with Jesus Christ, than to conquer with sin and error. You are not alone. Would that I were with you, for the affair is mine as well as yours: nay, it is more mine than that of any one among you. I undertook it not rashly, nor from any motives of avarice or vain glory: I call God to witness that I did not; and the event has justified, and will yet further justify, my words. Trust, then, in the promises of your God. Remember the words, 'Cast all your cares upon him, for He careth for you.' Consider this also; 'Be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.' Why should you fear the world which Christ has conquered? Is not this an assurance so comforting, that it would be worth while to go to Rome, nay, to Jerusalem, to hear it, had we to creep thither on our knees? But we are so accustomed to hear these consolations of the Lord, that they lose their value and efficacy with us."

Having thus exhorted Melancthon to pray more earnestly for the strengthening of his faith, he proceeds in the true spirit of an evangelist: "But I reason with you in vain; you are bewildered by your philosophy; you believe that these affairs depend on human wisdom,

and thereby fulfil the proverb, '*Cum ratione insanit.*' You torment yourself with a thousand anxieties, forgetting that the business is above your light and your strength; that it must proceed by itself, and that Jesus Christ does not desire that success should be the result of either human counsels or human power."

The diet was re-assembled on the 3d of August, and the emperor directed the count palatine to inform the members present, that, having submitted the confession of the protestants to the examination of pious and learned men, they had delivered the result of their inquiries on the subject, and that he approved of their decision. The reply of the Romanist divines was then read; the only doctrines which it represented as wholly heretical, and, therefore, to be rejected, being these five:—1. That good works have no merit. 2. That justification is conferred by faith without good works. 3. That the church is the assembly of the just. 4. That we cannot satisfy for sins. 5. That the saints intercede not for us.

Of the other articles, some were designated as more, and others as less, heretical. The expressions made use of to describe the presence of Christ's body and blood in the sacrament of the last supper, were represented as not sufficiently explicit, for that it ought to have been said that the bread and wine are entirely changed. But little objection was offered to the article on confession, except that it was ordered, that a full and complete confession ought to be made once a year. The authority of the bishops not seeming to be sufficiently recognised in the confession, the examiners required, that no minister should be allowed the charge of a church, or the office of instructing the people, without especial permission from the bishops.

In that division of the confession, which contained the articles referring to ceremonies and discipline, the first noticed was that on the administration of the communion in both kinds. This they wholly rejected; and the emperor himself added his commands, that the general practice of the Christian world should be here

followed. 'In a similar manner, the marriage of priests was condemned as opposed to the usage of the church from the days of the apostles. The article on the mass was received conditionally. If it agreed with what the church believed, it was right ; if not, wrong, and worthy of reprobation. To this brief sentence it was added, that the mass is a sacrifice both for the living and the dead ; and that private masses ought not to have been abolished. The theological student will smile when he reads, that in support of their censure of the reformers on this point, the examiners of the confession quoted the prophecy of Daniel, in which he describes the coming of antichrist as attended by the ceasing of sacrifices. With regard to monastic vows, both the Old and New Testament were cited as affording authorities for their continuance ; and those who had preached against them were denounced as worthy of punishment. The authority of bishops, and the necessity of abstinence, as an essential exercise of the spiritual life, were spoken of in a similar tone.*

The document was read to the assembly ; and at its conclusion, the protestants requested that a copy might be given them for the purpose of examining its contents more particularly, before they returned an answer to its demands. This request was refused. Two days after the late meeting, the emperor desired their presence ; and they were required to accede to the statements of the refutation, and return to the bosom of the church : on hearing which, they again asked for a copy of the document, but were long denied this most reasonable request. At length the emperor consented to let them receive the document, but insisted that they should bind themselves by an oath neither to transcribe nor publish it. To this they objected ; and Charles, finding them resolved on pursuing a firm and pre-determined course, at length agreed to leave the subject in the hands of the elector of Brandenburg, the archbishops of Mentz and Salzburg, duke George of

* Seckendorf. Beausolre.

Saxony, and the bishops of Wurtzburg, Bamberg, and Strasburgh.

Mediators like these had no claim on the confidence of the protestants: they were, for the most part, known allies of Campegio, and the authors of the most intolerant counsels. The landgrave of Hesse regarded their deliberations with angry suspicion; and, not being able to endure the seeming injustice of the emperor, or fearful of some sudden attack on his person, he secretly departed from Augsburg, leaving as an excuse, that intelligence had arrived of the illness of his wife. As little reason had the elector of Saxony to be satisfied with his position. To the wishes he expressed respecting the formal investiture of his states, the emperor returned answers which manifested a determination to grant nothing which could be refused or delayed without creating an immediate and open rupture. The departure of the landgrave did not tend to produce more favourable sentiments in the mind of Charles; and, allowing his anger to prevail, he imprudently directed that the secret gate of the city should be opened to no one, and then ordered out a detachment of his own troops to guard the principal public avenues.

Such a proceeding was too offensive to the dignity of the protestant princes and deputies to be viewed in silence. The elector of Saxony, therefore, represented to the emperor that it was contrary to the customs which prevailed during the assembling of a diet; and that, with regard to the landgrave, his principal ministers remained behind to make known his wishes and resolutions on the subjects in debate. Charles discovered, from the calm and dignified manner of the elector, that the step he had taken could not be persevered in without danger; and, pleading his ignorance of the practices which prevailed in the diet, and his fears lest tumults might take place between the Germans and the Spaniards, he immediately directed the guards to be withdrawn.

A few days after this, the protestants were summoned

to receive the decision of the mediators. As was expected, their cause had gained nothing while left in the hands of these persons. The elector of Brandenburg addressed them in a speech of some length, the tone and purpose of which might have prevailed with ignorant schismatics, but was little suited to the minds of men enlightened by study and reflection. To the arguments which he advanced were added threatening intimations, still less likely to influence the protestants. The elector of Saxony, it is said, trembled for the moment when he heard it declared, that if he retracted not his errors, his dignity and his life would fall a sacrifice to the just indignation of the emperor: but he was too well established in his faith to allow himself to be surprised into unworthy concessions. Time was demanded, that the address of the mediators might be properly considered; and in the two days which intervened between the meeting here described and the answer of the protestants, the elector had recovered his wonted firmness, and the remonstrance was indicative of the noblest determination to concede nothing which conscience required to be preserved. "How unreasonable is it," said they, "to demand that we should assent to a refutation of our doctrines which we are not allowed to examine!" To this objection the commissioners replied, two days after, that as they had taken upon themselves to ridicule former decrees on the subject of religion, the emperor did not choose that the present instrument should be exposed to a similar fate; but that, if they required it, they might again peruse, and consider, the refutation.

On the 13th of August the protestants again appeared before an assembly of the catholic princes and bishops. They had drawn up their reply with a caution that is not perhaps unjustly charged with an appearance of timidity. Melancthon was the principal adviser on the occasion; and temperate, conciliating, and careful at all times, he may reasonably be supposed to have been now influenced, in some degree, by the

danger which would attend an opposite conduct. He omitted no opportunity, therefore, of appealing to the most influential of the catholics. With them he consulted as anxious only for the restoration of peace. Weighing carefully in his mind what might be conceded to necessity, without a violation of conscience, or injuring the vital principles of the Reformation, he arrived at conclusions which bolder men would less willingly have entertained. In proof of the temporizing tendency of his thoughts at this time, a letter is quoted which he is said to have addressed to cardinal Campegio. If this epistle be authentic, he certainly pleaded with an earnest humility of expression which consorts ill with the style lately adopted by Luther.* But after all that has been said upon the subject, he only offered that which Luther himself was willing to concede at an earlier period. There is nothing in Melancthon's letter to the legate which is not to be found in Luther's letters to Leo X. ; and the most, therefore, which can properly be gathered from it is this, that the former was only then arrived at the same stage of intelligence and resolution as that which the latter had reached when he pleaded so earnestly with the pontiff, and even with Henry VIII. and duke George of Saxony.

But still further, what did Melancthon offer to concede? Not doctrine, or questions of discipline connected with doctrine, but points which related to ecclesiastical government, or to the tolerance of the catholics, who, mixed up with the protestants, might demand the privilege of following their own customs. That which is chiefly objectionable in Melancthon's appeal is his desiring the grant of things by way of

* His most remarkable words are, "Dogmata nullum habemus diversum ab ecclesia Romana: multos etiam repressimus, qui perniciose dogmata docere conati sunt parati sumus obtemperare ecclesie Romanae, modo ut illa pro sua clementia, qua semper erga omnes homines usa est, pauca quaedam vel dissimulet vel relaxet, quae jam, ne quidem si velimus, mutare possumus Romani pontificis auctoritatem et universam politiam ecclesiae nostrae reverenter colimus, necdum non adp. et nos Romanus pontifex Nullam aliam ob rem plus odii sustinemus in Germania, quam quia ecclesiae Romanae dogmata summa constantia defendimus." — *L. autoburg*, t. iv. liv. viii. 35b. — *Seckendorf*, lib. ii. sect. 3d. p. 129

favour, which he knew had been seized on, and would be kept, as the rightful and inalienable possession of his brethren. He begged that the pope would allow them the communion in both kinds. That he would permit the marriage of priests, or at least not dissolve those unions which had already been contracted by ecclesiastics; and with respect to the mass, he spoke indefinitely, so as to leave the catholics room to suppose that they would restore some of the abrogated ceremonies. The style, moreover, of the letter was too submissive for the dignity of one who represented a great and powerful party. But with all these circumstances to give a suspicious air to his proceedings, enough was left in the implied demands of the party, to render it impossible for the catholics to receive his appeal without yielding the most important of their defences.

Melancthon waited in vain for a reply. He therefore addressed himself to the secretary of Campegio. He had offered conditions, he said, which he trusted would lay the foundations of peace and unity. Were they granted, the protestant clergy would render submission to the bishops, would own the authority of the pope, and use their utmost care and influence to prevent further complaints and discord. This strongly expressed offer of concession to the bishops opened a door for fresh objections to Melancthon's policy. Their authority was so intimately bound up with that of Rome, that the views and directions of the pontiff must always have formed the basis of their proceedings. The present arrangements of the Lutherans, on the other hand, were so at variance with the recognition of episcopal authority, that to reinstate them as heads of the church, to subject the principles of reform to their judgment and revisal, to oblige the newly-appointed pastors of the reformed congregations to preach, and regulate customs and ceremonies, by whatever rule they should institute, — this evidently would be to endanger the whole system which it had been deemed expedient to propose for the

support of the evangelical doctrines. It could not be supposed that the bishops, when acknowledged as invested with true pastoral supremacy, would remain contented with the formality of a jurisdiction not to be exercised against innovations which they abhorred; still less likely was it that the court of Rome, to the power of which they were immediately subject, would leave them at liberty to act as their own dispositions, or local policy, might dictate.

Luther, when informed of the steps which had been taken to forward the wishes of those who were most eager for peace, spoke strongly against the concessions offered to the influence of the bishops. He saw that too much had been acquired by resisting their authority, to allow of that authority being re-established without a vital injury to the protestant cause. Melanethon, on the other hand, argued that the church would be torn by innumerable schisms, unless the ancient power of the prelates was again recognised; that heresies of the worst description would follow in the train of these disorders; and that any present attempt to annihilate the dominion of the pope and the bishops would be attended with dangers, to which the faith and constancy of many were at present insufficient.

These sentiments of Melanethon only partially prevailed at the meeting of the 13th of August. Pontanus boldly persisted in declaring that the pope was anti-christ; and when the offer of obedience to the bishops was made, it was with this qualifying clause: "So far as is allowed by the word of God." The conference ended with the protestants expressing a desire that commissioners might be appointed, on each side, for the further consideration of mutual concessions. This being agreed to, the emperor himself appointed seven representatives for each party. Those for the protestants were George marquis of Brandenburg and John Frederic prince of Saxony; Pontanus and Heller, as juriconsults, and the three theologians, Melanethon, Brennius, and Schnepff. On the side of the catholics, were

the bishop of Augsburg, Henry duke of Brunswick, two jurisconsults, Jerome Vele and Bernard de Hagen, and the three divines, Eckius, Cochleus, and Wimpfen. The conference was carried on with the usual vivacity of argument and rejoinder. At length the disputants discovered, that the object of the meeting was not likely to be attained so long as fourteen persons remained to deliver their opinions. The argument was, therefore, left to Melancthon and the two jurisconsults, on the one side, and to Eckius, with his two legal supporters on the other. Difficulties still existing, the catholics proposed the re-introduction of the full number: to this the protestants objected, except they were recalled for the purpose of proposing measures for the assembling of a general council.

It was not till after a dispute of several days, that the commissioners arrived at even an apparent agreement on any points of the controversy. Those which respected the doctrine and rites of the mass remained as they were. No concession on these could be made by either party. The same was the case in regard to monastic vows. As to the marriage of priests, the catholic advocates agreed, that it should be tolerated in those cases in which it had taken place, but in no future case. They also consented to the toleration of the communion in both kinds, and some matters of inferior importance, till the calling of a council. But these concessions were purchased at much too dear a rate, if the protestants paid for them as things yielded in good faith, to the truth and honesty of their representatives. So doubtful was this, that the deputies of Nuremberg and those of Hesse and Luneborg positively refused to acknowledge the proceedings of Melancthon.

The emperor seeing that, however long the discussion was continued, it would still leave the subject undetermined, again resolved to use his own persuasions for the settlement of the dispute. He accordingly called to his presence, on the 7th of September, the chiefs of the catholic party, and entered into a full

examination of their sentiments. He next invited the protestants to an audience, and listened with similar patience and attention to the expression of their wishes. At the conclusion of their address, he earnestly exhorted them to cultivate peace rather than persevere in a course which led to so many and such great disorders. It was strange, he said, how four or five princes could obstinately contend for opinions which contradicted the universal sense of the Christian church; but he added, that as they desired a council, no efforts should be left unemployed to satisfy them on that point, this only being stipulated, that till the council assembled, they should restore the customs which had been so prematurely abolished.

Notwithstanding the conciliatory spirit of Melancthon, the answer returned to this speech of the emperor was such as became men who had undertaken the defence of a pure religion. "We are neither schismatics nor innovators," they said. "We anxiously desire the summoning of a general council; but we cannot agree to the suppression of the truth, or the tolerance of superstitious practices, till it assemble; and should we attempt to do so, the people whom we represent are too enlightened not to resist us."

The emperor having consulted for a short time with his ministers, replied in a tone which expressed a mixture of danger and disappointment. He had examined, he said, the notes of the conference which had lately taken place, and was equally surprised at the patience and gentleness of the catholics, and the obstinate perverseness of the protestants. Finding, therefore, how little hope there was of their yielding to argument, he should allow them but a week longer to deliberate on their final answer; at the end of which time, if they returned not to their duty to the church, he should adopt those measures of coercion which the occasion seemed to demand.

It required less time than the emperor had given to enable the protestants to frame their reply. They

referred his majesty to their confession, as affording sufficient proofs that the guilt of heresy was falsely laid to their charge: they had protested, they said, against the decree passed at Spire, but they would not insist on that, being contented to abide by those of the diets held in 1524 and the two following years. It would be useless, they added, to continue the conferences: the only remedy was the assembling of a council, and such a one as should be free, and hold its meetings in Germany: till this was done, they would labour to preserve the empire in peace, and take no steps which could not be justified in the eyes of God and their fellow Christians.*

Charles had now no alternative but to consult with his ministers, and the catholic chiefs, as to the nature of the decree which it would be necessary to frame against the refractory protestants. The commissioners chosen for this purpose were the bishops of Salzburg, Spire, and Strasburg, William prince of Bavaria, Henry of Brunswick, and the duke George of Saxony. It was now that the elector of Saxony meditated taking his departure from the diet, and returning to his states. He beheld with hopeless regret the gradual extinction of the few hopes which had been entertained by himself and his party, that they might, by time and moderate concessions, have prevented the necessity of an open breach with the head of the empire. But while preparing for his departure, a message was sent from the emperor, desiring him to remain four days longer. This was on September 18th; and on the 22d he was summoned, with the rest of the princes, to attend the reading of the decree which had just been drawn up against him and his party.

This instrument, which was looked for in the light of a sentence, purported, that as their confession had been refuted by the learned persons employed to consider its several articles, and as they had agreed to renounce some of the points which it contained, although they persevered in retaining others, the emperor would

* Sleidan, t. i. liv. vii. p. 291

still further allow them till the fifteenth of the following April to consider whether they would submit or not to the orders he had issued. It was expected, in the mean time, that they should live peaceably, observing the laws of the empire, and the ordinances of the church, and using their utmost exertions to suppress the disorderly proceedings of the anabaptists and sacramentarians.

To this the protestants, who had the day before presented a document to the commissioners, containing the principal articles of their faith, replied, that their confession had not been refuted ; but that they had prepared an apology for that confession, and would not now depart from any thing which it contained. The emperor refused to receive the apology ; and having dismissed the princes, summoned to his presence the deputies of Strasburg, Constance, Meiningen, and Lindau. Unfortunately for the interests of the reformation, the two parties of Lutherans and Zuinglians, or sacramentarians, still obstinately resisted the persuasions of the princes to unite with each other at the diet, and struggle for the common cause. Their divisions had afforded great encouragement to the enemy ; and perilous as was the condition of both parties at the present moment, the spirit of contention which existed between them defied every argument that persuaded to peace. The Zuinglians, therefore, came before the emperor with their own particular confession. It differed from that of the Lutherans only on the points which regarded the real presence ; and Charles discovered that whatever hopes might have been created by the disputes of the reformers, they were on both sides equally resolved to resist his authority when he became the advocate of the Roman church.

The business was now too far advanced to admit of the delays and deceptive pretences for new proposals, which had been allowed at an earlier period. On the following day, therefore, the princes, with the exception of the elector of Saxony, who was preparing for his departure, again appeared before the emperor. He

employed, as before, the eloquence of the elector of Brandenburg to impress them with a sense of his clemency, and, if possible, of their own error and contumacy. The substance of the address was contained in assertions respecting the antiquity of the catholic church, and the unreasonableness of doctrines opposed to those which it had defended for ages. With regard to the apology which they offered to present, he now refused to receive it, he said, for it was not his duty to engage in controversy, and he had finally resolved, should they again refuse his conciliatory offers, to take such measures as became his rank and his office.

To these declarations, made in the name of the emperor, the elector of Brandenburg added his own exhortations. "You know," he said, "with what fidelity, solicitude, and diligence the princes and all orders of the empire have laboured for the re-establishment of peace. Reflect, then, seriously on what you do; weigh well the consequences of throwing the whole empire into confusion; for be assured, if you attempt to defy the sovereign, not an order in the state will be wanting at his call. They have already pledged themselves to assist him with their possessions and with their blood; and this their loyal offers have been met by his promise to employ all his power and force to the same end, and not to quit the country till by their united efforts it has been accomplished."

Charles had the good sense to give marked signs of displeasure at this conclusion of the elector's speech. The venerable Pontanus answered it in the tone of a man not less conscious of the truth than anxious to secure the safety of the cause for which he pleaded. "Our confession," he said, "is drawn from the word of God, and neither the world nor the devil can ever prevail against it. We have used no artifice, we have been guilty of no self-will in declaring our faith. Let us be allowed to receive a copy of the decree against us, and we will yield whatever the word of God will permit us to relinquish. In every thing but religion

we are willing to submit to the wishes of the emperor ; and we hear with surprise that the other states think it necessary to bind themselves by an oath to this service. We are too devoted to his majesty to feel the want of such supports to our loyalty. It has been said that we have robbed monasteries and wasted the possessions of ecclesiastics ; but let it be known how we have employed the wealth which has fallen into our hands, and we fear not the judgment of the world."

The emperor paused for a time to consider his answer, and then desired the elector of Brandenburg to inform the protestants, that if they persisted in not submitting themselves to the decree which had been passed, another, embracing more rigorous conditions, would be framed. Allusion was also made to the revolt of the peasants, which they were accused of instigating, and they were still further loaded with reprobation for having, as it was again said, pillaged the clergy and the monasteries ; an argument against them which influenced many persons who were insensible to the accusations with which they were charged on the score of doctrine. But they rebutted this attack, with the observation, that the monks could not be properly regarded as the actual proprietors of the possessions in question, and that if they were, the settlement of this part of the dispute would take but little time.

At length, worn out with the prolonged discussion, both the emperor and the protestants eagerly desired to end the debate. The latter, therefore, plainly declared, that as a copy of the decree was refused them, and they were left without the means of properly preparing a defence, they would no longer importune his majesty, but leave their cause in the hand of God. Thus ended the discussion ; and scarcely had the last words fallen from the lips of the protestant advocate, when the pious and venerable elector entered the hall to take his leave of the emperor. Warmed by a sudden fervour of spirit, he exclaimed, as he presented himself to Charles, " The doctrine contained in our confession is the doctrine of

the Scriptures, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." The emperor manifested his own good feeling, and high respect for the virtues of the elector, by immediately stretching out his hand to him in token of friendship; but as he gave it, he said, "My cousin, we should not have expected this from you!" The elector bowed, and retired without a word.

Nothing now remained to be done, but the securing of supplies for the war against the Turks. It had been foreseen that Ferdinand and the emperor must appeal to the states for this purpose. Philip of Hesse, and the elector of Saxony, had, accordingly, determined not to render aid, either by money or arms, till satisfaction was given them respecting their own safety. In this they were joined by the other protestant princes and deputies; and also by the representatives of the sacramentarians. Neither arguments nor threats could move them from the politic determination thus taken; and the greatest monarch in Europe, supported by the power and influence of the Roman church, found himself effectually thwarted in his designs by the resolution of a few princes, who based their independence on a pure and reasonable faith.

Once more the landgrave of Hesse and the elector appealed, by their deputies, to the justice of the emperor. The same was done by the deputies of the other protestant princes and states; but his answer simply was that, as they had refused to acknowledge the decree, he had made an alliance, not offensive, but defensive, that he might be prepared to assist those who, professing the same religion as himself, might on that account be exposed to danger. To this the deputies made answer by addressing a note to the diet, desiring that their names might not be added to the decree, and stating that if, as was reported, they were hereafter to be denied a seat in the tribunal of the empire because of their protestation, they must not be expected to contribute any thing to the support of that august assembly.

On the 19th of November the diet met for the last time. Before the recess was declared, the emperor

directed the various acts of the assembly to be read, and, lastly, the decree, from the operation of which every member of the state looked for the most important events. By this instrument it was ordered "that no toleration should be granted to those who taught any doctrine respecting the Lord's supper but that which had been anciently received: that no change should be allowed in the celebration of masses, either public or private: that the confirmation of children should be performed with oil; and that the sacrament of extreme unction should be administered to the dying: that neither images nor statues should be removed from churches, and that they should be restored in those places where they had been taken down: that the opinion of those who denied free-will should not be tolerated, seeing that such a doctrine was injurious to God, and reduced man to the level of the beasts: that nothing should be taught which could give offence to magistrates: that the dogma should not be maintained which teaches that faith alone justifies: that the same number of sacraments should be allowed as formerly: that none of the customs of the church should be abolished, such as prayers for the dead, the ceremonies of the mass, and other things of the same nature: that ecclesiastical benefices should be conferred on persons properly qualified for the office: that priests who had married should be deprived of their appointments, which should immediately be conferred on others: that the bishops should have the power of reinstating those who, choosing to quit their wives, and seeking absolution, had returned to their former state; but that the others should be allowed no place of refuge, should be banished, and otherwise punished as their crimes deserved: that the lives of priests should be exemplary and free from offence: that if in any place the possessions of ecclesiastics had been wrongly sold, and the money applied to profane purposes, the transaction should be declared null and void, and the goods restored: that no person should be permitted to preach without a certificate from his bishop: that in preaching, all should follow the

prescribed formulary : that no one should indulge himself in abuse and railing : that they should exhort the people to hear mass ; to be attentive to prayer ; to supplicate the Virgin Mary and the other saints ; to observe the festivals ; to fast ; to abstain from forbidden meats ; to declare that monks could not lawfully break their vows or abandon their order : that, in short, nothing should be changed in respect either to doctrine or to the worship of God, and that those who attempted to do so should be judged worthy of death, or, at least, of the confiscation of their possessions : that the monasteries which had been destroyed should be rebuilt, and the rights, customs, and privileges which pertained to them be established as before : that those who professed the ancient faith, in protestant states, should be taken under the protection of the empire, and be permitted to depart whithersoever they might choose, without loss or harm : that the pope should be solicited to convoke a council, to be held in some convenient place, by the end of six months, and that it should assemble at latest within a year after its convocation : that all the articles of this decree should be observed according to their full force and meaning, and that, if appeals were made against them, these appeals should not be received or acknowledged : that to secure obedience to this decree, the faithful should employ whatever God had given them, their strength, their goods, and even their lives : that if arms were taken up to injure any order in the state, the imperial chamber should immediately send forth its commands to enforce observance of the laws ; that if the attack should be continued, the fiscal of the empire should pass sentence on the offender, doom him to banishment, and make known the sentence to the other princes and states, that they might afford succour to him who was oppressed. Lastly, that no one should be admitted as an assessor in the chamber who had not accepted the decree, so far as it regarded religion, and that they who already enjoyed a right to that privilege should for their contumacy be forthwith deprived thereof."

Such was the result of all those lengthened and painful debates which had occupied the attention of the diet from its first session to the publication of the recess. History rarely affords materials so abundant to aid the inquirer in his judgment as those possessed in the present instance. The letters, the speeches, the writings, and the public decrees of the principal actors on the occasion, have come down to us, preserved on both sides as valuable memorials of events infinitely important to the interests of the church. To him who regards protestantism as the precious medium through which the divine light of primitive times flows down in an unbroken stream; to him who rejoices in the privileges of mental liberty, hallowed, secured, and perpetuated by sanctions of eternal truth,—to him who thus views the reformation of religion, it is a difficult task to contemplate, without feelings of indignation, the unfair arts and bold injustice practised against its originators and champions. But, little was known in those days of what is due to men either as citizens or christians. Princes and the heads of the church were alike blinded by the notion of their own dignity; and the principles which appeared in the one under the form of state policy and arbitrary enactments, were those which showed themselves in the other by the publication of dogmas that had no savour of doctrine; the invention of rites that had no connection with holiness, and the demand of a tribute when there was already more than enough to establish and decorate the temple of God. It required ages of improvement to teach men the value of truth. Ages more will be required to bring them to the love of truth; and with the knowledge we possess of the power which ambition, the love of wealth and dominion, still exercise in the world, we ought, perhaps, to feel little surprised that when these principles were, for the first time, assailed with daring energy, a struggle ensued in which justice, truth, and charity were frequent sufferers.

CHAP. X.

COMMENCEMENT OF THE REFORMATION IN SPAIN AND OTHER COUNTRIES. — RELIGIOUS FREEDOM IN SPAIN. — INTRODUCTION OF THE INQUISITION. — ITS PROCEEDINGS AGAINST THE JEWS. — APPEARANCE OF LUTHERANISM. — ALARM OF THE INQUISITION. — MEASURES FOR THE SUPPRESSION OF THE REFORMED DOCTRINES. — MARTYRS. — EXTINCTION OF LUTHERANISM IN SPAIN.

HAVING traced the progress of the Reformation to the close of its first grand epoch, we leave for a time the scene of its birth, to contemplate the efforts made for its establishment in other countries. Our view of this, its enlarging sphere, must be brief and rapid. Unhappily, a large portion of civilized Europe has to be traversed before we arrive at another of the resting-places of truth, or where the early triumphs of knowledge and pure Christianity have left permanent monuments to render the subject interesting or profitable.

The intimate political connexion between Spain and Germany, united under one crown, produced a frequency of communication which opened an easy way for the extension of the Reformation to the former country. But circumstances of a very different nature characterised the situation of the two nations. In the one, freedom and knowledge began to prevail; and though the despotism of superstition still fettered the mass of the people, it had ceased to be borne with the patience and content of preceding times. The constitution of the several states afforded important helps to any project of reform. Opportunities for obtaining a successful hearing were in proportion to the number of independent princes; and men of enlightened minds had little reason to fear that

any confederacy could be permanently established against the interests of truth, were truth itself once owned and accepted by the people. Spain, on the other hand, was the possession of one monarch, whose object it had always been to aggrandize himself, and unite with the church in subjecting the nation to their mutual schemes. The people themselves were chivalrous and romantic; delighting in whatever appealed by its grandeur to their imagination, or which promised to gratify their national pride. They were easily, therefore, taught to yield implicit obedience to the exhortations which at one time urged them to the field, and at another bowed them at the feet of priests and bishops. This ready subjection on the side of the people was, for the most part, rewarded by clemency and moderation on that of the rulers; and were man made only for this world—had he no capabilities, the exercise and developement of which depend on his advance in knowledge, the peace and affluence which so often attend such a state of things would argue strongly in favour of its continuance.

But it is impossible that mankind should long remain without discovering some glimpses of the real dignity and purposes of their being, or that this discovery should be made without a lamentable conflict following between those who burn for emancipation, and those who resolve to retain a dominion which they have been taught, by habit and long possession, to regard as essential both to themselves and the world.

We spoke, at the beginning of this volume, of the general circumstances which rendered a reformation necessary and probable. The history of a few events, from the annals of Spain, immediately preceding and following its commencement, will show, in yet stronger light, how necessary it was to the safety of mankind, and how fearful was the loss to those among whom the power of superstition and the papacy prevailed over the efforts made for their delivery.

Spain enjoyed for several ages a greater degree of religious freedom than most of the countries subjected to

papal domination.* The loss of this freedom was announced by the introduction of the inquisition in the 13th century. Evidence exists to prove that, before that event, dissenters from the established system had less to fear in the Peninsula than in any part of catholic Europe. Though not altogether left to teach the doctrines they professed without molestation, they had to dread none of those tortures or capital punishments which subsequently attended a conviction of heresy. Even after a king of Aragon had been persuaded by the head of the church to issue an edict against the Vaudois, and other heretics in his dominions, a comparatively mild and temperate spirit appears to have moderated religious councils. The schismatics were ordered to quit his states, but a sufficient period was allowed them to do so without the danger attending a sudden expulsion; and though the decree deprived such of them as should be found within the limits of the kingdom, after the time specified, of all protection from the laws, it particularly named, that no violence was to be exercised on their persons which might cause either death or mutilation. That which tends still more strikingly to illustrate the indisposition of the Spaniards at this period to become persecutors, is the fact, that the edict of Alphonso was almost wholly disregarded, and that when his son and successor renewed it, about three years after its first publication, the magistrates and others were exhorted respecting its execution, in a manner which indicates the backwardness of the public authorities to comply with the desires of the church.

But this state of things was not viewed with indifference by the court of Rome; and the disciples of saint Dominic had no sooner proved their zeal as inquisitors in Italy and France, than the pope conceived the design of establishing them as conservators of the catholic faith in Spain. In the year 1232, Gregory IX.

* *Histoire Critique de l'Inquisition d'Espagne*, par Llorente. *M'Crie's Reformation in Spain*. *Geddes' Tracts*.

addressed a brief to the archbishop of Tarragona and his suffragans, in which he expresses his regret at having learnt, that heresy had already greatly infected the cities of that province, and his hope that they would oppose its progress by searching out the guilty themselves, and directing the preaching monks and others to do so likewise. From this period the measures necessary to the establishment of the holy office were pursued with persevering diligence; and so zealous was Ferdinand III. in his desire to further its object, that he is reported to have carried the wood with his own hands which was intended to burn the heretics.

Considerable opposition, however, was made to these proceedings by the people; and the princes who favoured the inquisitors found themselves obliged to pass decrees compelling the magistrates to afford protection to the Dominicans, and to assist them in their labours by removing all impediments to the exercise of their functions, and by furnishing them with horses, and whatever else was necessary for their journeys. But, notwithstanding these orders, it was with considerable difficulty that the first ministers of the inquisition effected their purposes. They had almost every where to encounter the abuse of the populace, not yet accustomed to tremble in silence at their name; and, in many instances, the punishment which they were eager to inflict on the objects of their bigoted hate fell with merited execrations on themselves. Some were poisoned, others were stoned to death, and the chronicles of the Dominicans and Cordeliers are said to contain a long register of the names and sufferings of the numerous members belonging to those orders who perished in the service of the inquisition.*

But neither the court of Rome nor its ministers were to be deterred from pursuing their object by popular resistance, and the inquisition continued to acquire additional stability under each successive pontiff. It was not, however, till Ferdinand and Isabel united under one

* Llorente, Hist. de l'Inquis.

sceptre the kingdoms of Aragon and Castile, that it assumed the character of a supreme and independent court, and began that system of tyranny which rendered it the parent of so many dark and untold crimes. In the year 1477, they were applied to for a confirmation of the privileges enjoyed by the inquisitors of Sicily, the sovereignty of which belonged to Ferdinand. Having yielded to this request, they were next applied to by the ecclesiastics of Aragon and Castile to increase the power of the holy office in the former, and to establish it in the latter, where it was hitherto unknown. After encountering considerable opposition from the queen, who is said to have been naturally averse to a measure so fraught with danger to her people, the favourers of the inquisitors at length succeeded by a strong appeal to her religious fears; and she consented to petition the pope to issue a bull for the establishment of the inquisition in her kingdom of Castile. But she was still far from believing, that the violent measures proposed by her advisers, in this affair, were either required, or likely to prove useful, and the king had to use all the arguments of which he was master before he could prevail on her to change the mild system of policy with which she commenced her reign.

The members, however, of the holy office in Castile were at last named; and on the 9th of October, 1480, an order was issued, in the name of the king and queen, commanding the governors of the provinces to furnish the inquisitors and their attendants with all things necessary for their journey to Seville. It may be easily imagined how hateful was their arrival to the good people of that city, when it is mentioned that, notwithstanding the royal authority with which they came armed, they found it impossible to collect together the number of persons whose presence was necessary to the legal opening of their assembly. A new order had, consequently, to be issued by the government, but this met with almost as bad success as the former; and the inquisitors had no sooner thus unpropitiously commenced

their functions, than all the Jews and others, who had been lately converted to Christianity, fled from the territory of Castile into the neighbouring lordships of independent noblemen.*

To the infamy of the new inquisitors be it spoken, the unfortunate persons who had forsaken their homes, from a dread of approaching persecution, were, by the first act of the holy office, followed into the districts where they had sought refuge, and were brought back to Seville, to be lodged in the dungeons which the fathers had prepared for them in their own palace. Nothing could exceed the iniquity of this proceeding. It is possible that men blinded by bigotry, and inspired by intemperate zeal, may conceive it to be their duty to silence the voice of heresy, when it is likely to find an echo in the society over which they may have charge, but it is only the most fearful thirst for blood — the most wanton love of barbarity, that could induce zealots, however blind or violent, to bring back those whose fear had already put them out of the power of doing harm, and whose example could only be regarded as contagious while they were present among the people, from whom they had separated themselves by a voluntary exile. But in spite of the dictates of common sense, or with the most perfect contempt of humanity, the inquisitors of Castile were eager to fill their prison; and their first exertions were wasted in punishing men who, without being exposed to torture, would never have again ventured to propound their doctrines to the people of Seville.

If any circumstance could increase the barbarity of these proceedings, it is, that they were directed against a set of men who had every reason to expect the most temperate and charitable treatment on the part of the ruling ecclesiasties. Spain, in the fifteenth century, contained a very numerous body of Jews, and, by the caution and industry with which they had carried on the traffic in which they engaged, they composed by far the richer portion of the general population. The

* Llorente, *Hist. de l'Inquisit.*

prejudices of the multitude had more than ever subjected these unfortunate people to the most cruel sufferings. In the year 1391, more than 5000 Jews are said to have been butchered by the populace in different cities; and such was the terror which these sanguinary persecutions inspired, that numbers of those who escaped rushed to the churches and fonts to be immediately baptized. This, which was at first the consequence of a sudden panic, continued to be the course pursued by the Jews for many years after, their only chance of permanent safety evidently depending on their renouncing the religion in which they had been educated. More than a hundred thousand families, it is reported, submitted to this forced conversion; and the Romish clergy had the folly to expect, or the wickedness to demand, that these poor affrighted converts should exhibit every mark of the most perfect attachment to their new religion.*

* The following description of the tortures to which the unfortunate victims were commonly exposed, may well account for the occasional instances to be met with of their sufferings overcoming even the strongest dictates of duty.

"Having fixed the day when he is to undergo the tortures, he, when that dismal day comes, if he does not prevent it by such a confession as is expected from him, is led to the place where the rack is, attended by an inquisitor, and a public notary, who is to write down the answers the prisoner returns to the questions which shall be put to him by the inquisitor whilst he is upon the rack. During the time the executioner is preparing that engine of unspeakable cruelty, and is taking off the prisoner's clothes to his shirt and drawers, the inquisitor is still exhorting the prisoner to have compassion both on his body and soul, and, by making a true and full confession of all his heresies, to prevent his being tortured. But if the prisoner saith that he will suffer any thing rather than accuse himself or others falsely, the inquisitor commands the executioner to do his duty, and to begin the torture; which, in the inquisition, is given by twisting a small cord hard about the prisoner's naked arms, and hoisting him up from the ground by an engine to which the cord is fastened. And, as if the miserable prisoner's hanging in the air by his arms were not torment enough, he has several quassations, or shakes, given him; which is done by screwing his body up higher, and letting it down again with a jerk, which dis-joints his arms, and after that the torture is much more exquisite than it was before.

"When the prisoner is first hoisted from the ground, an hour-glass is turned up, and which, if he does not prevent it by making such a confession of his heresies as the inquisitor that is present all the while, and is continually asking him questions, expects from him, must run out before he is taken down; to promise to make such a confession, if they will take him off the rack, not being sufficient to procure him that mercy, no more than his crying out he shall expire immediately if they do not give him some ease; that, as the inquisitors tell us, being no more than all that are upon the rack do think they are ready to do.

"If the prisoner endures the rack without confessing any thing, which

It is almost impossible to imagine a worse complication of evils than that which was produced by the measures pursued against the Jews. Murder and robbery became in time to be regarded by the priests as the best means of establishing their dominion. The pretended converts learnt to consider it lawful to practise every species of hypocrisy to save their lives and property. Sacraments were received with a contempt which would have been blasphemous in the receivers under any other circumstances, but the guilt of which now belonged only to those who administered them. The deepest-seated enmity inspired the new Christians, as they were termed, in all their dealings with those whom they dare only hate in secret; and having apostatised to save their lives, they soon regarded it as perfectly lawful to use every art in their power to obtain a share of the public employments and other advantages from which they had hitherto been shut out. Malice and servility were thus the distinguishing characteristics of these new disciples of the Gospel; and as they were despised by the people before their conversion, they were now not only despised, but regarded with a fear and jealousy only to be equalled by the hate with which they themselves viewed the authors of their apostacy.

Never had persecution a more favourable opportunity

few, or none, though never so innocent, are able to do; so soon as the hour-glass is out, he is taken down, and carried back to his prison, where there is a chirurgion ready to put his bones in joint. And though in all other courts, the prisoners having endured the rack without confessing the crimes for which they were tortured clears them, and makes void all the evidence that was against them, yet in the inquisition, where whatsoever humanity and right reason have established in favour of the prisoner is left to the discretion of the judge, it is commonly otherwise; the prisoner that will not confess any thing, being usually racked twice, and if they stand it out, though few of them can do that, thrice.

"But if the prisoner makes the confession the inquisitor expects he should on the rack, it is writ down word for word by the notary, and is, after the prisoner has had a day or two's rest, carried to the prisoner, to set his hand to it, which if the prisoner does it puts an end to his process, the want of sufficient evidence to have convicted him being abundantly supplied by this extorted confession thus signed by him; but in case the prisoner, when it is brought to him, refuseth to sign it, affirming it to be false, and to have been extorted from him by the extremity of the torture, he is then carried to the rack a second time, to oblige him to repeat and sign the same confession." — *Giddes' Tracts*.

for the exercise of her vengeance. Instances of relapse were repeatedly occurring among the converts, and even those who persevered in an outward conformity to Christian rites were uniformly watched with a suspicious eye. The least word or gesture, which could by any means be converted into a sign of disaffection, was considered as a proof, that coercive measures were still necessary to save the new disciple from destruction. It was not difficult to found an argument upon this notion in favour of the inquisition; and as Ferdinand is supposed to have added to his love for religion a strong desire to possess himself of the wealth belonging to his Jewish subjects, the holy office was at once furnished with a fit motive for zeal and diligence. Almost immediately after their entrance upon duty, the inquisitors issued an edict exhibiting the rules by which they intended to judge the unfortunate persons who should fall under the cognizance of their tribunal. Not the slightest circumstance was here omitted which might in any way tend to criminate the suspected Jew. Nor was any respect paid to the prejudices which long custom must naturally have engendered. To eat of the same food as the Jews, or to sit at table with any of them: to give a child a name known among them; to say grace in their customary manner, or to observe any of their ancient and venerated festivals, was an offence sufficiently great to place him as a criminal before the bar of the holy office. Not a week had passed, therefore, from the first meeting of the inquisition, before six of its unfortunate prisoners were burnt to death. The execution of these early victims to its wretched laws took place in January; and the March following seventeen others experienced a similar fate. The next month a still greater number perished in the flames; and in November, 298 lately converted but relapsed Jews had paid the penalty of their error, in this terrible manner, by the sentence of the same tribunal. Besides those who were thus capitally punished, seventy-nine were condemned to perpetual imprisonment; and that which

considerably increases the horror of this recital is the fact, that the whole of these victims were drawn from the single city of Seville, in which the fires of the inquisition were so continually blazing, that the prefect found it necessary to construct a permanent scaffold of stone in a field outside the walls.

This excessive violence, on the part of the new institution, was regarded by the people of Castile with unmingled horror, and complaints were preferred without intermission to the pope respecting the injustice of its proceedings. There was more than one reason, at this period, to induce the pontiff to lend a willing ear to these protestations. The present inquisitors had been appointed without his assent; and though it was an object of the utmost importance to the papal court, to establish the institution on a firm and permanent basis, it was in every respect desirable to avoid an appearance of violence or injustice, which it was evident, even in those times of darkness, might considerably endanger the whole fabric. With the most consummate policy, therefore, the pope professed his willingness to receive any appeals made to him on the subject; and he soon after wrote to the king and queen, complaining that their inquisitors had condemned persons for heresy who were not guilty of that crime, and adding that he would have dissolved the tribunal, had he not been prevented by respect for the royal ordinance to which it owed its institution. He however revoked, he said, the authority which had been given it to establish others, and intimated that he would himself find proper persons to perform the functions of the holy office, choosing them according to the directions of the general and provincial of the Dominicans, to whom alone that privilege properly belonged. A week or two after writing as above, he again addressed Ferdinand and Isabel on the same subject, and informed them, that the general of the Dominicans having found it necessary to increase the number of the inquisitors, he had appointed some persons of his own order

immediately to enter on the duties connected with the holy office. The king, it appears, was somewhat alarmed at this procedure, so manifestly an encroachment on his prerogatives; and the pope answered his remonstrance, by informing him, that what he had done was according to the advice of several cardinals then absent from Rome, but that the ordinance should be reconsidered on their return. Isabel, about the same time, addressed the pontiff, with a request, that he would establish the holy office on a new and more fixed principle, and that he would make its judgments definitive and without appeal to Rome; adding a complaint, that she was publicly accused of only favouring the inquisition in order to enrich herself with the confiscated goods of the persons condemned by its decrees.

The pope's answer to Isabel was conceived in the most artful terms; and he especially advised her not to trouble her conscience with what was said respecting the confiscations. An apostolic judge of appeal in Spain was soon after appointed; and he then again wrote both to her and the king, exhorting them to persevere in the designs which they had so laudably commenced, reminding them, that Jesus Christ had established his kingdom upon earth by the destruction of idolatry, and assuring them that they owed their late victory over the Moors entirely to the love which they had evinced for the purity of the faith. But whatever effect these admonitions might have on the sovereigns of Castile and Aragon, they made no impression on their subjects. The Castilians were loud in their complaints; and the Aragonese, not contented with expressing their indignation by words, formed a conspiracy to sacrifice one of the chief inquisitors, in order, as it was said, to terrify others from undertaking the exercise of such functions. The design, however, was suspected, and the attempts of the conspirators, though often renewed, were for a long time defeated by the caution of the inquisitor, the object of their machinations. But prudence even is not always a sufficient protector

against the watchful spirit of popular hate. As he was performing service one night in the metropolitan church, and while the monks were singing in the choir, one of the assassins approached him, and striking him a violent blow on the arm with his sword, severed the limb in two. The assault was repeated by some of the other conspirators present, and the inquisitor was taken from the church mortally wounded.

But the consequences of this event were near proving fatal to the converted Jews. The populace, being easily persuaded to believe that the murder was to be ascribed solely to them, rose in a mass to avenge the death of a man whom they had all dreaded, and whom nothing but an appeal to deep-rooted prejudices would have induced them to lament. By the exertions of the archbishop of Aragon, the tumult was, after some time, subdued; the memory of the inquisitor was honoured by a monument raised to his name by the queen, whose confessor he had been, and he was at last canonised as both a saint and a martyr. But though public tranquillity was restored, scenes of the most terrific nature were daily exhibited to the people. More than 200 persons were condemned to death on suspicion of having been concerned in the late conspiracy. A still greater number were plunged into the gloomy dungeons, from which there was no hope of their being ever delivered; and there was scarcely, it is said, a noble family in Aragon who had not to lament the affliction and disgrace of having seen some one of its members put to death on the scaffold. To give even a brief detail of the barbarities practised on the victims of this period would be to shock and disgust the least susceptible of readers; but there is one anecdote related by Llorente which so well illustrates the character of the men charged with protecting the purity of the Christian faith, that we cannot pass it over without notice.

Among the persons suspected of having taken part with the conspirators, was a gentleman named Gaspar de Santa Cruz, but having discovered the dan-

ger of his situation in time to effect his escape, he fled to Toulouse, where he died. Enraged at having lost their intended victim, the holy office ordered him to be burnt in effigy ; and, not content with this, they apprehended his son on the charge of having assisted his parent to escape. As the young man, it seems, was not able to clear himself from this accusation, he was sentenced to appear as a criminal at the next *auto da fé* ; and Gaspard being now dead and buried, he was next ordered to take a copy of the sentence which had been passed against his father to the Dominicans of Toulouse, and desire them to disinter his remains and burn them ; after seeing which done, he was to return to Aragon, with a certificate that he had complied with their instructions. The young man submitted to this sentence, it is added, without a complaint, and thus afforded a memorable proof of the entire prostration which our nature may suffer under a system of either civil or religious tyranny.

These proceedings had been chiefly directed against the converted Jews, but, in the year 1498, the attention of Ferdinand and his inquisitors was employed upon those who had hitherto exhibited no signs of a disposition to change their religion. The king, it is proved, on the most solid grounds, was bent upon increasing his treasure by the confiscation of the property belonging to such of his subjects as could, in any way, be convicted of disaffection to the established faith. The relapsed Jews had now for a long time furnished him with a rich and plentiful harvest ; but to obtain money from the others was a matter of comparative difficulty, and, however well managed, had always the appearance of an unjust extortion. But though exposed at one time to the lawless attacks of their sovereign, and at another to the furious assaults of the multitude, these unfortunate people persevered in their gainful traffic, and endured every species of hardship rather than forsake a country in which they could trade with success.

At the period, however, of which we are speaking,

the king signified his intention to follow the advice of the grand inquisitor, Torquemada, and expel them finally from his territories. Whether the real offences of the Jews at this time, the superstition or the cupidity of the monarch, were the immediate cause of this resolution, is not easy to be determined; but the terrified Israelites instinctively ascribing it to the last-mentioned motive, or believing that every other would yield if that were removed, hastened to offer Ferdinand a gift of thirty thousand ducats, if he would allow them to remain unmolested. That every objection to his accepting this offer might be silenced, they further professed themselves ready to conform to whatever regulations he should think proper to impose upon their society. They consented to denounce the exercise of professions which Christians considered as belonging exclusively to themselves; they were willing to confine their residences to a certain quarter of the city, and always to retire to their houses before night.

The liberal offer of the Jews, connected as it was with so much humility, considerably abated the ardour of Ferdinand's zeal; and he manifested a willingness to lessen, in some degree, the rigour with which he had intended to treat them. He met with no sympathy, however, in this feeling, from the grand inquisitor, who, the moment he became acquainted with the change in the royal sentiments, presented himself before Ferdinand and Isabel with a crucifix in his hand, and addressed them with these startling words: — "*Judas at the first sold his master for thirty pieces of silver. Your majesties are proposing to sell him a second time for thirty thousand pieces of silver. Here then he is! Take him and sell him!*" Honesty may safely dare the attacks of fanaticism, but it is one of the curses of a bad conscience to be continually in its power. Ferdinand trembled at the voice of Torquemada; and a few days after published a decree by which the Jews were ordered to quit Spain within three months, on pain

of losing all their possessions, should they neglect to obey the ordinance. Eight hundred thousand Jews, it is calculated, were expelled from their homes by this measure ; and a similar conduct being pursued, at the same time, towards the lately conquered Moors of Grenada, Spain is supposed to have lost, within a few months, more than two millions of its inhabitants, all of them the victims of a persecution as contrary to good policy as it was to the plainest principles of the Christian religion.

The above will suffice to give the reader some notion of the state of religion in Spain, previous to the reformation. In the year 1524, the holy office at Seville adopted an inscription which affords an excellent summary of its annals from 1492, when the expulsion of the Jews took place, to the time when it put forth the document alluded to. "In the year of our Lord 1481," says the inscription, "under the pontificate of Sextus IV., and in the reign of Ferdinand V. and Isabel, sovereigns of Spain and the Two Sicilies, has commenced in this place the holy office of the inquisition against judaising heretics, for the exaltation of the faith. Here, since the expulsion of the Jews and Saracens, to the year 1524, in the reign of Charles, emperor of the Romans, the successor by his mother of those two sovereigns, and the most reverend D. Alphonso Manrique, archbishop of Seville, being grand inquisitor, more than 20,000 heretics have abjured the dreadful crime of heresy ; and more than 1000 persons who persisted in their heresy have been delivered to the flames, after suffering condemnation according to the law — Innocent VIII., Alexander VI., Pius III., Julius II., Leo X., Adrian VI., (who was raised to the pontificate while he was cardinal, governor of Spain, and inquisitor-general,) and Clement VII. all approving and confirming those decrees. The licenciate of La Cueva has directed this inscription, composed by Diegese de Cortegana, archdeacon of Seville, to be put

up, according to the order and at the expense of the emperor our master, in the year 1524.*"

The inquisition, it thus appears, had been long in full activity, when new employment was furnished it by the birth of Lutheranism. That event, while it gave fresh activity to the holy office, exhibits its proceedings under a more odious aspect, if possible, than ever. The Jews were accused of the most dreadful crimes, and

* The inquisition was established later in Portugal, but on the same plan; and the following catalogue of the officials will serve to show how carefully the whole system was arranged.

"The *inquisitor general* is named by the king, but confirmed and authorised by the *pope*, to act as his delegate; he lives constantly at *Lisbon*, in an house in the inquisition, which belongs to his office. It is a place of so great dignity and profit, that the cardinal *infante don Henry*, and *Albert* cardinal, arch-duke of *Austria*, were in it, and *don Verissimo Alencastro* left the primacy of *Braga* for it.

"The *counsellors* of the supreme court are all named by the *inquisitor major*, but must before they act have the king's approbation: this council sits constantly twice a week at *Lisbon*.

"The *inquisitors*, who are commonly secular priests, do belong either to the supreme court which is fixed at *Lisbon*, or to the inquisitions of *Cóimbra*, *Ibora*, or *Goa*, in the *East Indies*; which courts have all the same inferior officers and stiles, and have all their acts of the faith.

"The *assessors* are divines, civilians, and canonists, which are consulted by the inquisitors in all difficult cases.

"The qualificators are employed in correcting and amending of books and are commonly *Dominican friars*.

"It is to be hoped the *heresy of doctrines* is better understood by these qualificators, than the etymology of the word heretic was by the writer of their Repertorium, printed at *Venice*, in the year 1588, who, to show his critical learning, saith the word *hereticus*, according to some, is compounded of *error* and *recto*; because an *heretic* errs from what is right. According to others it is derived from *erescor*, which signifies to divide; and according to some it comes from *adhæreo*, because it is one's adhering obstinately to an error, that makes him an *heretic*. And with the same stock of learning it was that another *inquisitor* proved from St. Paul's words, *hæreticum devita*, that *Christians* were commanded to *deprive heretics of their lives*.

"The *secretary* writes down whatever is said judicially in the inquisition.

"The *advocate fiscal* prosecutes the prisoner with his utmost skill and diligence to convict him of *heresy*.

"The *treasurer* has the estate and all the goods of the prisoner put into his hands when the prisoner is apprehended.

"The *familiars* are the *hulth* of the *inquisition*; which, though it is a vile office in all other criminal courts, is esteemed so honourable in this of the *inquisition*, that there is not a nobleman in the kingdom that is not in it, and who are commonly employed by the inquisitors to apprehend people. Neither is it any wonder that persons of the highest quality desire to be thus employed, since the same plenary indulgence is by the *pope* granted to every single exercise of this office as was granted by the *Lateran council* to those that succoured the *Holy Land*.

"The *gaolers* are directed by the inquisitors how to dispose of, and how to treat, their prisoners, and are straitly charged not to give, nor to suffer them to have, any manner of intelligence."—*Geddes' Miscellaneous Tracts*, vol. i.

the ignorance and deplorable bigotry of both the clergy and the people enabled their accusers to find willing listeners, however gross or incredible their tales. A colour was thus given to the proceedings against that much wronged people, which might sometimes prevent even their persecutors from being fully aware of the monstrous iniquity of their own conduct. But when the inquisitors turned from those whom they had been taught to regard as the enemies of whatever is pure and holy, to slaughter men who believed in the same truths as themselves, and whose only crime was their wish to make those truths more generally known, and to present them less blended with error, they became the basest of their species, and it would be impossible to find, in the history of the world, the names of men more worthy of everlasting detestation.

The introduction of the reformed opinions into Spain might be looked for as a natural consequence of the intercourse kept up between that country and Germany. The channel of communication thereby opened for the transaction of political business, was easily available for the purposes of religion. Some of Luther's Latin works were, at an early period of his career, transmitted to Spain, and having obtained the approbation of several men of ability there, they were followed by others, which were translated into Spanish, and freely circulated among the common people. The correspondence of private individuals with their friends served to make the proceedings in Germany still more generally known, and to excite a spirit of anxious inquiry as to the nature of the dispute, and the reasons on which Luther opposed the church. It may be easily imagined that in the case of the Spaniards this was something more than curiosity. Groaning under the scourge of the inquisition, they would eagerly catch at any chance of emancipating themselves from its odious tyranny; and the information, consequently, which was given them respecting the bold attack on the Roman hierarchy, would inspire all who possessed any

freedom of thought with a wish to join in the struggle. Persons of this description were not wanting either in Spain itself, or among natives of that country, who formed part of the emperor's suite in Germany. Alfonso Valdes and Francisco de Angelis, attendants on the imperial court, contributed greatly—the one by his letters, the other by his journeys between the two countries—to enlighten their countrymen on the subject; both being men of ability, and strongly inclined to advance the Lutheran cause. The line of policy which Charles found it profitable to pursue for a time, very much favoured this sentiment among his courtiers; and when he asked their advice respecting the confession delivered by the protestants at Augsburg, they replied, that if he found the doctrines of the Lutherans to be contrary to the articles of faith, he ought to suppress the sect; but that, if the members of it only demanded the abolition of certain ceremonies and things not of vital importance to the faith, he ought not to have recourse to violent measures against them; and that they, therefore, advised him to submit the points in dispute to the examination of pious and unprejudiced persons.*

The inquisition was too well practised in its functions, not to make itself acquainted with circumstances, so threatening to its safety, immediately on their occurrence. From the Jews they had had nothing to fear: their attacks upon that people were made without the slightest idea of opposition, and they were sure of reaping a plentiful harvest for their sovereign whenever they chose to commence a persecution. But with the Lutherans they had to pursue a more cautious course. These sectarians had already diminished the territory of the church; they had succeeded in resisting its highest authority; and there was ample room for believing, that their heresy would ere long spread throughout

* That several of the Spanish nobility urged the emperor to moderate councils before he set out for Germany, appears from his conferences with the pope at Bologna, and from the known sentiments of his chief adviser, Gattinara. Seckendorf. Sleidan.

Europe, and endanger the existence of the church itself. In resisting them, therefore, the inquisitors knew they were struggling for the very existence of their holy office; and having determined to take no account of the reasonableness of the cause they opposed, they began their attack by issuing edicts which prohibited the exercise of private judgment in the smallest matter of religious belief or worship. According to these ordinances, it was the bounden duty of every Christian to make known to the inquisition, if he had ever heard it said, or if he suspected any one of thinking, that the sect of Luther was good, or that its members were in the way of life. The same orders are still more fully expressed in an edict purporting to be directed against the Illuminati, as they were called; but as all reformers might be accused, in Spain, of nearly the same opinions, it may be considered in its consequences as applying to the body at large.

At first, however, the holy office, though it arrested and imprisoned many persons of eminence suspected of Lutheranism, proceeded with caution in subjecting them to punishment. In one instance — that of a celebrated preacher, named Juan de Avila — the inquisitor-general himself interceded, and obtained the acquittal of the accused; in others, a formal penance was admitted as a sufficient punishment; and in some the guilty heretic was allowed to expiate his crime in a dungeon, instead of being brought to the stake. But in proportion to the rapidity with which the new doctrines gained ground, the inquisitors ceased to be thus forbearing in their proceedings, and the unfortunate persons who fell into their hands were subjected to tortures more terrific than any invented by the most barbarous of savage nations.* The accession of Philip II. to the throne of

* The description which Dr. Geddes has given of an auto-da-fé, from personal observation, will afford some idea of the proceedings: —

“In the morning of the day the prisoners are all brought into a great hall, where they have the habits put on they are to wear in the procession, which begins to come out of the inquisition about nine o'clock in the morning.

Spain tended considerably to increase their authority, and in 1557 and 1558 many supposed protestants of rank

"The first in the procession are the Dominicans, who carry the standard of the inquisition, which on the one side hath their founder, Dominick's, picture, and on the other side the cross, betwixt an olive tree and a sword, with this motto, '*Justitia et Misericordia*.' Next after the Dominicans come the penitents; some with benitoes, and some without, according to the nature of their crimes. They are all in black coats without sleeves, and bare-footed, with a wax candle in their hands. Next come the penitents who have narrowly escaped being burnt, who over their black coats have flames painted, with their points turned downwards, to signify their having been saved, but so as by fire; this habit is called by the Portuguese *ferro revolto*. Next come the neg dive and relapsed, that are to be burnt, with flames upon their habit, pointing upward; and next come those who profess doctrines contrary to the faith of the Roman church, and who, besides flames on their habit pointing upward, have their picture, which is drawn two or three days before, upon their breasts, with dogs, serpents, and devils, all with open mouths, painted about it.

"Pegna, a famous Spanish inquirer, calls this procession '*Horrendum ac tremendum spectaculum*;' and so it is in truth, there being something in the looks of all the prisoners, besides those that are to be burnt, that is ghastly and disconsolate, beyond what can be imagined; and in the eyes and countenances of those that are to be burnt, there is something that looks fierce and eager.

"The prisoners that are to be burnt alive, besides a familiar, which all the rest have, have a jesuit on each hand of them, who are continually preaching to them to abjure their heresies; but if they offer to speak any thing in defence of the doctrines they are going to suffer death for professing, they are immediately gagged, and not suffered to speak a word more. This I saw done to a prisoner, presently after he came out of the gates of the inquisition, upon his having looked up to the sun, which he had not seen before in several years, and cried out in a rupture, 'How is it possible for people that behold that glorious body to worship any being but him that created it?'

"After the prisoners comes a troop of familiars on horseback, and after them the inquisitors and other officers of the court, upon mules; and last of all comes the inquisitor-general upon a white horse, led by two men, with a black hat, and a green Lizard, and attended by all the nobles that are not employed as familiars in the procession.

"In the Terreiro de Paço, which may be as far from the inquisition as Whitehall is from Temple Bar, there is a scaffold erected, which may hold two or three thousand people; at the one end sit the inquisitors, and at the other end the prisoners, and in the same order as they walked in the procession; those that are to be burnt being seated on the highest benches behind the rest, which may be ten feet above the floor of the scaffold.

"The prisoners are no sooner in the hands of the civil magistrate, than they are loaded with chains, before the eyes of the inquisitors; and being carried first to the secular gaol, are, within an hour or two, brought from thence, before the lord chief justice, who, without knowing any thing of their particular crimes, or of the evidence that was against them, asks them, one by one, in what religion they do intend to die. If they answer, that they will die in the communion of the church of Rome, they are condemned by him to be carried forthwith to the place of execution, and there to be first strangled, and afterwards burnt to ashes. But if they say they will die in the protestant, or in any other faith that is contrary to the Roman, they are then sentenced by him to be carried forthwith to the place of execution, and there to be burnt alive.

"At the place of execution, which at Lisbon is the Ribera, there are many stakes set up as there are prisoners to be burnt, with a good quantity of dry furze about them. The stakes of the protestant, as the inquisitors

and distinction were apprehended and brought before their tribunal. Certain papers, it is said, were found in the possession of these prisoners, which convinced the king and the chief inquisitor, Valdes, that a project was in agitation for establishing the opinions of Luther in every part of the nation. Whether their apprehensions were well or ill founded, they were sufficient to induce Philip to acquaint the pope with the circumstance; and in answer to the information thus given him, his holiness dispatched a brief to the inquisitor-general, in which he authorised him to deliver over to the secular power all dogmatizing Lutheran heretics; those even who were not guilty of a relapse, and who, to escape capital punishment, gave only equivocal signs of repentance. This brief was shortly afterwards followed by another, in which the inquisitor was directed to take

call them, may be about four yards high, and have a small board, whereon the prisoner is to be seated, within half a yard of the top. The professed and relapsed being first strangled and burnt, the professed go up a ladder, betwixt the two jesuits which have attended them all day; and when they have come even with the fore-mentioned board, they turn about to the people, and the jesuits spend near a quarter of an hour in exhorting the professed to be reconciled to the church of Rome; which, if they refuse to be, the jesuits come down, and the executioner ascends, and having turned the professed off the ladder upon the seat, and chained their bodies close to the stake, he leaves them; and the jesuits go up to them a second time, to renew their exhortation to them; and at parting tell them, that they leave them to the devil, who is standing at their elbow to receive their souls, and carry them with him into the flames of hell-fire, so soon as they are out of their bodies. Upon this a great shout is raised, and as soon as the jesuits are off the ladders, the cry is, 'Let the dog's beards, let the dog's beards be made!' which is done by thrusting flaming furzes, fastened to a long pole, against their faces. And this inhumanity is commonly continued until their faces are burnt to a coal; and is always accompanied with such loud acclamations of joy as are not to be heard upon any other occasion — a bull feast or a farce being dull entertainments to the using a professed heretic thus inhumanly.

"The professed beards having been thus made or trimmed, as they call it in jollity, fires set to the furze, which are at the bottom of the stake, and above which the professed are chained so high, that the top of the flame seldom reaches higher than the seat they sit on; and if there happens to be a wind, to which that place is much exposed, it seldom reaches so high as their knees: so that though, if there be a calm, the professed are commonly dead in about half an hour after the furze is set on fire, yet, if the weather prove windy, they are not after that dead in an hour and a half, or two hours, and so are really roasted and not burnt to death. But though, out of hell, there cannot possibly be a more lamentable spectacle than this, being joined with the sufferers so long as they are able to speak) crying out, 'Miserecordia por amour de Dios,' 'Mercy for the love of God;' yet it is beheld by people of both sexes, and all ages, with such transports of joy and satisfaction, as are not on any other occasion to be met with." — *Miscellaneous Tracts*, vol. i.

particular cognizance of those who read or possessed any of the works of Luther.

The publication of these, and other pontifical ordinances, opened so extensive a field of action to the holy office, that it was thought necessary to appoint additional functionaries; and the number of persons arrested in Seville and Valladolid was at length so great that *autos da fe* were celebrated, which make a conspicuous figure in the history of the inquisition at this period. The former of these dreadful exhibitions occurred at Valladolid, on Trinity Sunday, May 21, 1559. To render it the more solemn, and to increase the dignity of the holy office, the prince, Don Carlos, and his aunt Juana, regent of the kingdom during the absence of Philip, appeared in the midst of the assembly, seated on a throne fitted up for them on one side of the square in which the execution was to take place. Before the ceremony commenced an oath was administered to them, by which they became pledged to support the inquisition, and to reveal whatever they might discover which threatened any danger to the faith. The prince, who was then but fourteen years of age, is said to have inwardly vowed, as he took this oath, an eternal enmity to the infamous institution which thus sought to fetter his understanding, and unfit him for the station to which he was born. After the example of Don Carlos and his aunt, most of the principal nobility of Spain appeared among the crowds assembled from all quarters to witness the ceremony; and the great square, surrounded as it was by this motley multitude of eager spectators, and furnished with altars, scaffolds, and tribunals, presented a scene of which it is difficult to say whether it be more terrific to the imagination or disgusting to the understanding.

As in the execution of heretics in other parts of Europe, a sermon was preached at the commencement of the proceedings by one of the most celebrated of the divines present; and these preparations being concluded, the prisoners were brought forward to undergo the

sentences which had been passed upon them. The number of these unfortunate persons amounted to thirty, of whom sixteen, after having renounced their heretical opinions, had been reconciled, but were, notwithstanding, condemned to appear in the *auto da fé*. The other fourteen were destined for the flames, and of these two were burnt alive, and twelve strangled and then burnt. The execution of the victims, and the ceremonies attending it, occupied the attention of the assembly from six o'clock in the morning till two in the afternoon. Juana, the regent, was among the last who retired from the scene; and the eight hours, during which the spectacle lasted, were hardly sufficient to satiate the curiosity of the multitude. The greater part of those who suffered in this *auto da fé* were persons of high respectability, and some of them had held offices of importance in the church. Among these was Doctor Augustine Cazalla, priest and canon of Salamanca, and almoner and preacher to the king and the emperor. He had been in Germany when Charles V. was in that country, and had during his stay imbibed those sceptical notions respecting the power of the pope which eventually led to his condemnation. On his return to Spain he distinguished himself by his opposition to the papal pretensions, and from that period became an object of suspicion to the holy office. He denied most explicitly on his trial that he ever preached the Lutheran doctrines, and expected, to the last, that the submission with which he received the rebuke of the inquisitors would have saved him from any punishment further than that inflicted upon reconciled penitents. But, to his horror, he was visited on the evening preceding the *auto da fé* by one of the fathers, who acquainted him that he was to die the next day; and the only favour granted him in virtue of his repentance, was that of being strangled before he was thrown into the flames.*

The impression supposed to be made by this *auto da fé*,

* Florente, Hist. de l'Inqum.

was not suffered to become weak in the minds of the people of Valladolid. In the October of the same year, the holy office again led its victims into the great square of the city, and was again honoured by the presence of royalty. The king was now returned from the Netherlands, and he seems to have considered it the most pressing of his duties to further, by every means in his power, the designs of the inquisition. Taking with him his son, his sister Juana, and all the nobility attendant on his court, he willingly allowed his subjects to regard him as the great support of an institution, which threatened them with a more complete destruction of their liberties than was ever suffered by any civilised people in the world. Thirteen unfortunate persons were burnt to death in his presence on this occasion, some of them exhibiting a degree of firmness in the assertion of their faith which would have excited admiration in minds not wholly darkened by bigotry, and others petitioning for mercy, and professing so deep a penitence, that they must have been secure of pardon had not their persecutors been resolved to shed their blood.

There is one circumstance mentioned in the account of this *auto da fẽ* which marks in the strongest manner the comparative indifference of the holy office to the worst of crimes, if they tended to further rather than oppose its proceedings. Among the sixteen persons condemned to appear as penitents on this occasion, was one Antonio Sanchez, a native of Salamanca, who had been guilty of falsely accusing a Jewish Christian of circumcising a child, for which supposed offence against the laws the convert was condemned to be burnt to death. The perjury of Sanchez was clearly proved, and it might reasonably have been expected, that he would be subjected to the same punishment as that to which he had exposed the victim of his malice. Not merely natural justice, but the circumstances under which the inquisition acted, demanded that crimes of this sort should be visited with the severest penalties. Instead, however, of showing their horror at the guilt

of Sanchez, by condemning him to undergo the tortures, which they were so ready to invent for a Lutheran, they simply sentenced him to the galleys for five years, and to receive 200 lashes of the whip; while, with nearly the same breath, they condemned a poor barber, who had ventured to play some tricks in the assumed character of an *alguazil*, to receive 400 lashes, and to be chained to the galleys for the whole of his life.

The *auto da fè* which took place at Seville a few weeks previous to the one at Valladolid, above described, exhibited a still greater number of victims than were seen at either of those celebrated in the latter city. No less than twenty-one persons were here punished with death, nor less than eighty obliged to undergo the severe ordeal of penitence. Among the former were several ecclesiastics of eminence, who appear to have been persons well qualified, both by their station and abilities, to establish by argument the reasonableness of their opinions. One of them especially, Garcia de Arias, or doctor Blanco, as he was commonly called, from the remarkable whiteness of his hair, was a man of considerable learning, and though long suspected by the inquisition, he had contrived till the present period to escape uninjured. In doing this, however, he had incurred the severe rebukes of those who knew his real opinions, and it was only by the bold and determined manner in which he declared his sentiments, when about to be condemned by the holy office, that he saved his name from the lasting infamy attending an apostate.*

Another conspicuous sufferer was doctor Christobal da Losada, a physician of Seville, who, having fallen violently in love with a young lady of that city, was rejected by her father, and used every argument in vain to bend him from his resolute opposition to the suit. At length the old citizen informed him, that he would accept no one for his son-in-law who could not bring with him an assurance from the celebrated Lutheran teacher, doctor Egidius, that he was

* Llorente, Hist. de l'Inqui.

thoroughly instructed in the Holy Scriptures, and that he interpreted them in the same manner as that divine. Christobal at once resolved to become the pupil of Egidius. Prompted at first by passion to use the utmost diligence in his studies, but perceiving as he proceeded sufficient to engage his reason on the same side, he quickly gave so much satisfaction to his teacher, that he was recommended by him as a fit person to preside over the protestant congregation in the city. The zeal and lability with which he exercised his new functions soon brought him under the notice of the inquisition: he was seized, examined according to the usual forms, and having been convicted of Lutheran opinions, which he stedfastly refused to recant, he was condemned to be burnt. When he arrived at the stake, the friars who attended the ceremony importuned him to renounce his errors; but, instead of assenting to their persuasions, he entered into a well-conducted defence of his opinions; and so perfectly did he retain his presence of mind to the last, that when the friars, in order to prevent his arguments from being understood by the people, began to converse in Latin, he continued his defence with the same ease in that language as he had done in Spanish.

The same *auto da fé* presented the affecting spectacle of a brother dying with his two sisters, whom he had taught to profess the truth, and who now appeared with him to prove, by their constancy and affection in death, how well they had profited by his lessons. The sufferers here alluded to, were doctor Juan Gonzalez and his two sisters. The demeanour of Juan himself appears to have been more dignified and resolute than was the case at all times with the Spanish martyrs. As he entered the place of execution he sang the 109th Psalm, and then turned to comfort one of his sisters, who seemed somewhat depressed, with assurances and exhortations adapted to raise her drooping spirits. But his fraternal piety served but as a provocative to the fury of his persecutors, who, on hearing him address his sister, thrust a gag into his mouth, and kept it there

till they required him to make his confession. His sisters, in repeating the apostles' creed, had been vehemently urged to add the word *Roman* to the *Catholic Church*, but they professed their resolution strictly to follow the example of their brother; and Juan persisting in his refusal to add anything to the articles of the belief, they were immediately put to death.

It would be impossible to make mention of all the instances of fortitude on the one side, and barbarity on the other, which are to be met with even in these earliest of the Spanish *autos da f *.* But in addition to the names of the victims already mentioned, those of Maria de Bohorques and her sister Juana richly deserve a place in these memorials.

Maria de Bohorques was one of those remarkable women who render themselves objects of wonder, and often of deserved admiration, by the success with which they employ their minds on subjects not within the usual circle of female studies. The natural daughter of one of the greatest noblemen in the nation, she was educated under the most celebrated masters, and at an early age could read the Latin translation of the Scriptures and the commentators. As her mind was too active to lie dormant while her memory was thus furnished with materials for its exertion, she gradually acquired a freedom of thought, which, before she was one-and-twenty, led her to adopt sentiments, for uttering which she was plunged into the dungeons of the holy office. But her mind was not less firm than active. Neither the gloom of the prison, nor the terrors with which the future was fraught, could prevent her from acknowledging and defending her sentiments in the presence of her persecutors. The heroism, however, of this young and enlightened girl had no other effect upon the inquisitors than to induce them to order her to the torture; and, while undergoing the excruciating sufferings which they inflicted, she let some words escape, which were eagerly caught by the attendants,

* Llorente, Hist. de l'Inquis. M'Cric, Hist. of Reform. in Spain

and were soon after made the foundation of a charge against her sister Juana.

As soon as the sentence of condemnation was passed, two jesuits were sent to converse with her. Zeal and charity taught them to employ every kind of argument to obtain from her a recantation of the opinions for which she was about to perish. But their exertions proved altogether fruitless; and they returned to their employers, professing the highest admiration of the extraordinary learning and talents displayed by the prisoner. On the evening preceding the day of her execution two Dominicans came to her cell, and after them several other ecclesiastics, but they were not more successful than the jesuits. Donna Maria received them with the grace and gentleness becoming her rank and sex, but told them that their persuasions would be employed in vain unless they could convince her that she was in error by arguments drawn from the Scriptures. She had also the courage to add, that if she did not doubt the truth of the reformed doctrines before falling into the hands of the inquisition, she was now more forcibly satisfied of their verity than ever; since, after all the arguments which had been employed against her, she was still assured that the opinions of Luther were right, and that they could not be controverted.

As she was proceeding to the place of execution, she manifested her fortitude, and the serenity of her mind, by repeatedly exhorting the other females who were about to suffer with her to bear their trial with hope and resignation. To prevent her continuing these exhortations, a gag was thrust into her mouth, and kept there till it was withdrawn in order to enable her to repeat the creed. On arriving at the spot appointed for the execution, her constancy had to endure another trial. Juan Ponce de Leon, a man of rank, and one of the most conspicuous professors of the Lutheran doctrines, had been condemned as an obstinate heretic; and, after some misgivings of nature, had

gained sufficient resolution to approach the scene of suffering with tolerable composure. But the appalling preparations which there met his eyes again shook his constancy ; and he is said to have purchased the high favour, as it was considered, of being strangled before he was committed to the flames, by confessing himself to the attendant priest, and recanting some part of his profession. His weakness also led him to address his fellow sufferers in a manner which favours the supposition, that he hoped to obtain mercy of his persecutors by appearing penitent for his supposed errors. In speaking to Maria de Bohorques, he begged her not to trust too much to what she had learned from her protestant teacher, but to embrace the truths which had been taught her by those who visited her in the prison. But the heroic young woman was too firmly convinced in her mind to be assailed by doubts at this moment, and she repulsed the vacillating counsels of Juan de Ponce with some degree of impetuosity ; remarking, that there was now no time for entering upon disputes, for that the few minutes which remained to them should be employed in meditating on the passion of the Redeemer, which would serve to reanimate their faith, and thereby support them under their sufferings. Even the most bigoted of the actors in this frightful scene were affected at the firm but engaging demeanour of Maria ; and when the collar for strangling her was put round her neck, some of the monks who stood by again made an effort to save her. Pity for her youth, and admiration of her surprising talents, furnished powerful arguments in her favour, and she was once more requested to repeat the creed. This she did without hesitation ; but the instant she had finished it she began to explain its meaning according to the Lutheran method. The pity which had for a minute inspired the attendant priests immediately gave way to the most violent indignation ; the fatal collar was refixed, and Maria de Bohorques in an instant ceased to breathe.

Little more than a year was suffered to elapse before

the members of the holy office at Seville again came to the resolution, that an *auto da fe* was necessary to clear the religious atmosphere of the noxious vapour engendered by Lutheranism. On the 22d of December, 1560, fourteen persons, therefore, were put to death with the usual solemnities, and thirty-four were exhibited as penitents. Among the former was an Englishman named Burton, a London merchant, who had visited Spain in the exercise of his profession, and traded partly on his own account, and partly on that of another merchant of Bristol. The great offence of which he had been guilty was that of speaking too freely of the superstitious of the Spaniards; and when apprehended and examined as to his own opinions, he was too truly an Englishman to conceal or recant them from any fear of the consequences. With Burton perished another also of our countrymen, William Burke, a seaman belonging to Southampton; and it adds no slight measure of infamy to the enemies of the Reformation to have it thus recorded, that they violated with unparalleled effrontery the law of nations, as well as that of common justice and humanity.

The condemnation of Burton, moreover, was attended with another circumstance which serves to increase the abhorrence with which the proceedings of the holy office are now viewed. Not contented with consigning him to the flames, they seized his vessel, and were about to apply its rich cargo to their own purposes. Information, however, had been sent to England respecting the apprehension of Burton; and the Bristol merchant, to whom the vessel in part belonged, immediately despatched a person named John Frampton, to Seville, to demand the restitution of his property. The charge was a difficult one to execute; but the documents with which the agent was furnished were unanswerable proofs of the justice of his claims; and, after having delayed the process as long as possible, and greatly multiplied the expenses of the applicant, the inquisitors were reluctantly obliged to promise him the restitution of his employer's goods. Will it now be credited, that

Frampton had scarcely thus brought his exertions to a successful issue, when persons were found who accused him of having spoken in favour of Lutheranism ; and that he was, on that suspicious charge, seized and committed to the dungeons of the holy office ? However incredible it may seem, that any class of men should pursue so flagrant a course of injustice, such was the case. Frampton, after undergoing the customary examinations, was allowed to submit himself as a penitent ; but was, notwithstanding, obliged to appear at the *auto da fé*, to suffer the confiscation of the vessel and cargo, and to carry a *san benito* for a year. The observations of the late secretary to the inquisition on this passage of its history, are just and curious. “ If the affair of John Frampton,” says he, “ had been public, an advocate of the meanest ability would have been able to prove the nullity and injustice of the proceedings against him. There are, notwithstanding, some Englishmen who defend the tribunal of the holy office as useful ; and I have heard its apology made by an English catholic priest. I made him see, however, that he knew little of the nature of this establishment ; that I was not less attached than himself or an inquisitor to the catholic religion ; but that, if we compare the spirit of peace and charity, of humility and disinterestedness, which inspires the Gospel, and which appears so strikingly in both the life and doctrines of Jesus Christ, with the system of rigour, of art, cunning, and malice which was dictated by the constitutions of the holy office, and with the actual and permanent means which the inquisitors have possessed of abusing their authority, in contempt of laws both natural and divine, of papal and royal ordinances, under the protection of that oath which insures them secrecy, we cannot fail to abhor their tribunal, or regard it as only fit to make men hypocrites.”

But if the above recital convicts the holy office of an act of palpable injustice, the record which is left of its proceedings against the sister of the excellent Maria

Bohorques, affords a still stronger proof of its cold and reckless barbarity. Juana was the legitimate daughter of don Pedro de Bohorques, and had been some time married to don Francisco de Vargas, the lord of Higuera. The few words, however, which escaped her sister while under torture, were sufficient to render her an object of suspicion to the holy office; and she was shortly after apprehended and placed under close confinement. She was at this time in the sixth month of her pregnancy, and it was, consequently, found necessary to treat her with somewhat less severity than was usually the case with the prisoners of the inquisition; but the indulgence did not extend beyond that which was absolutely necessary to preserve her from perishing; and, ill prepared as she was to bear the shock which she received from her apprehension, she was subjected to all the trying examinations of an ordinary heretic. During these inquiries, there appeared the strongest evidence to prove that she was innocent of any offence against the church; but the holy office never loosed its hold of its captives so long as it could invent the slightest reason for retaining them; and the unfortunate Juana was still in utter uncertainty respecting her fate, when she was brought to bed. The partial forbearance which had hitherto been exercised towards her was now at an end. Only eight days were suffered to elapse before her infant was taken from her; and she was yet in the most feeble state, when the servants of the tribunal carried her into the chamber of torture. Imagination sickens at the narrative. The cords that bound her to the wheel cut her limbs to the very bone; and, in the convulsions which from the beginning attended the dreadful agonies she suffered, her whole frame within was disorganised and lacerated! In this mutilated condition, and after having denied whatever was laid to her charge, she was carried back to the dungeon, where she lingered a few days, and then expired. But, monstrous as the conduct of the holy office must already appear to the reader, it will seem doubly so from the sequel of the narrative.

Juana de Bohorques had been confined on the most imperfect kind of evidence ; nothing had been elicited in her examinations to enable even her wicked judges to condemn her ; her tortures had failed in an equal manner to increase the materials which her persecutors were so anxious to accumulate : she could not, in short, be proved guilty of the offence of which she stood accused ; and this poor martyred victim of the most execrable of institutions was, during the celebration of the *auto da fé*, publicly declared to have been innocent.

The above brief account will suffice to instruct the reader as to the opposition made to Lutheranism in Spain, and the class of persons by whom it was professed. It is, however, to be borne in mind, that the scenes which took place in the cities above mentioned, were also exhibited in various other quarters ; and that, from the year 1560 to 1570, there was at least one *auto da fé* annually celebrated in every town which contained an office of the inquisition.* It was in the earlier portion of that period that the reformed doctrines made the greatest progress in Spain ; that the minds of its people were in the highest state of religious excitement ; and that the holy office, consequently, had the most favourable opportunity for the exercise of its functions.

Protestantism, soon after that time, ceased to be known in the Peninsula ; and the inquisition, cursed with success in its war against truth, had from thenceforward to content itself with the meaner triumphs of iniquity, and to be satisfied with the ruin and the misery of men whom it could never so cordially hate as the promoters of religious freedom. The accounts given of the *autos da fé*, in a subsequent age, afford a curious and convincing proof of this circumstance. Thus, in the one which took place at Madrid in 1632, nearly all the sufferers were Judaising Christians of Portugal. In another, celebrated at Valladolid four years afterwards, there were twenty-eight sufferers ; but of these ten were guilty of Judaising, eight of practising witchcraft, three

* Llorente, Hist. de l'Inquis.

of bigamy, three of blasphemy, and the remaining two of being in some slighter way offenders against good order. Here again, therefore, there was not a single protestant among the sufferers. In the year 1654, fifty-seven persons were publicly punished in the same manner at Cuença, but only one of them was condemned as a Lutheran.

CHAP. XI.

INTEREST EXCITED BY THE PROGRESS OF LUTHER. — HIS WORKS CIRCULATED IN ITALY. — CAUSES WHICH LED TO THE RECEPTION OF HIS DOCTRINES IN THAT COUNTRY. — PERSECUTIONS CREATED BY THE POPE. — MARTYRS. — SUPPRESSION OF THE REFORMATION. — ITS RISE IN FRANCE. — CALVIN AND HIS ASSOCIATES. — CONCLUSION.

THE universal dominion of the church of Rome gave an importance to the labours of Luther and his associates, which they would have had in an inferior degree had the different European nations been less closely united under the same ecclesiastical yoke. But forming only one family, the agitations which took place in any of the numerous provinces over which Rome held control, could scarcely fail of being felt in the others; and thus the unity of the church might hold out a fair hope of contributing to the speedy and universal diffusion of the reformed opinions. Many enlightened men in all parts of Europe beheld with the highest satisfaction the success of Luther. There was something in the character both of the man and the undertaking calculated to attract attention. The resolution with which he encountered the vast host of enemies to whom he stood opposed, the firmness with which he continued his work when the plots of his powerful enemies were in full operation against him, and the zeal for genuine religious truth and liberty which appeared in all his actions and discourses, demanded the respect of that numerous body of men, who, in such circumstances, earnestly desire to see a change produced, which they have either not the courage, or the necessary qualifications as controversialists, to attempt, in the first instance, to introduce themselves.

The conviction, indeed, that a reformation was necessary, existed long before Luther appeared in the world

as its apostle. It is not to be supposed that the corruptions, and many of the grosser errors, against which he preached, could have escaped the notice of the eminent scholars and philosophers who contributed to enlighten the last two centuries. In Italy the temporal authority of the popes had been strongly attacked, as early as the fourteenth century, by the great Dante, in his treatise "*De Monarchia*;" and some of Petrarch's epistles speak a language only inferior in severity to the harangues of Luther, because written by a more polished pen. The same spirit of opposition to the heads of the Roman church may be traced in the works of succeeding writers; and we are led to conclude, that so long as Divine Providence keeps the world in existence, no corruption of truth, whether in civil or religious matters, can blind men universally to its existence; and thus the signs of an incipient reformation may be often traced to a period long antecedent to that in which the reform has really taken place; and the venerable and noble-minded men to whom God gives the power of carrying the improvement into execution, are scarcely ever denied the satisfaction of finding their own sentiments supported by the intimation of history, that the greatest and the best of men have always cherished the same in their hearts.

When Luther, therefore, saw his labours crowned with success in Germany, he had reason to hope that the cause would be supported by men of learning and piety in every part of Europe: nor was he mistaken in this expectation. His voice, we have found, was heard in Spain: it was heard also in Italy, France, and England, as clearly almost as if he had stood and preached in the centre of their several capitals; and in a little time the effect of his doctrines was seen in the awakened attention of mankind at large to the subjects in dispute.

The earliest of Luther's works were circulated in Italy without attracting the notice of the pontifical court. Leo X. had no inclination to hunt after heresy exhibited in writings so different to those which ministered to

his taste, and that of the elegant scholars with whom he was surrounded. But the pontiff was not allowed to remain indifferent to the danger with which the writings of Luther and his associates threatened the church. An order was accordingly issued, which prohibited the reprinting, or the sale of any works, proceeding from the reformers of Germany or Switzerland. But so strong an impression had been created in favour of their views, that neither expense nor danger was allowed to prevent the continued circulation of the books in which they were explained.

The study of treatises which controverted, by direct and intelligible arguments, the principal dogmas and practices of the Roman church, could not fail to make a deep impression on the thoughtful Italians. But the doctrines of the reformers were diffused by other means. A continual intercourse was kept up with Germany; and that community of scholarship, which united such men as Erasmus and Melancthon with the learned of every country in Europe, must have defied, at any period, the efforts of arbitrary power to prevent the circulation of opinion.

Corrupt, moreover, as were the clergy of other countries, the haughty and luxurious habits of the Italian bishops must have led to scandals more dangerous to the church than the vices of their foreign brethren. They were assembled, as it were, at the door of the sanctuary; they were the chosen ministers who had to perform daily service at the high altar of their church; and when it was found that the strongest argument whereby they could be defended was this,—that they might be invested with authority by the church, which authority could neither be lessened by their personal vices, nor augmented by their virtues,—it is easy to conceive how honest-minded men must have trembled for the cause of holiness*, and how inclined they must have felt

* Such is the reasoning employed by Claudius Sysselius, archbishop of Turin:—"They say, that the bishop of Rome, and the other prelates and priests, do not at all imitate the life, or obey the precepts, of Jesus Christ and his apostles; but that they do quite the contrary, and in so public a

to admit any system which offered the prospect of reform.

The unsettled and divided state of Italy did not permit of any of those great and comprehensive designs

manner too, that their actions cannot be concealed, or doubted of, or palliated. On the contrary, say they, they glory in that which is most opposite to religion, and they seem not only to despise the rules which were given by Jesus Christ and his apostles, but even to expose them, and to mock at them; for Jesus Christ and his apostles lived in poverty, humility, chastity, and abstinence from all carnal things, and in a great contempt of the world; whereas we, who are the prelates and priests of the Roman church, live in state and in luxury, preferring the grandeur of princes to the sacerdotal holiness. All our endeavours, and all the steps we take, tend only to recommend us to the eyes of men, not by the virtue or holiness of our lives, or by our doctrine, but by the abundance of our riches, by great exploits in war, by numerous retinues, and by all kinds of magnificence. The apostles would not possess any thing in property, and received only those who parted with their goods, and put them into the common stock; whereas we are not content with what we have, but with a boundless desire covet also other men's goods, and declare ourselves their enemies, or commit acts of hostility that we may obtain them. The apostles went through towns and villages, preaching the word of God with success, and practising works of charity; whereas we not only do not any such thing, but we also oppose those who are employed in such exercises, and give them examples of all kinds of irregular practices. The primitive bishops were ordained, whether they would or not, by the divine appointment or inspiration, for the salvation of others; whereas we purchase our bishoprics and benefices with money, or we obtain them by intrigues at court, or by recommendations from princes, or by violence, or by other sinister methods, that we may gratify our passions, or enrich our friends, or acquire a great reputation or honour in this world. They spent their whole lives in hard labours, watchings, and austerities, and spared no pains to show others the way of salvation; whereas we pass the whole time of our life in idleness and pleasures, and in worldly business. They despised gold and silver, and dispensed blessings freely, as they had received them; whereas we do, as it were, expose sacred things to sale. In a word, to pass by other things, of which they imputably accuse us, we violate and break through all laws, divine and human; insomuch that the church of Rome, as they pretend, cannot any longer be called the spouse of Christ, but a prostitute."

The following is the answer which the good Scysselius gives to these accusations; and it affords rather strong evidence that he found it difficult to clear his brethren of the charges brought against them:—"Seeing," says he, "that there is no man who can imitate the apostles perfectly, it follows that, if the Waldenses speak true, there never has been, since their days, any bishop in the church. The Waldenses themselves do acknowledge, that this great apostolic perfection is not necessary; and they believe, that it is enough if the ministers be free from mortal sin; but if that were true, then there would not be any known or visible church, or any minister of whose power we could be assured; because it is impossible that a man can know whether the person to whom he addresses himself be guilty of mortal sin or not. A man does not know whether he himself be in a state of grace or not: how, then, can he know it of others? This uncertainty casts them into a great many inconveniences. First, we could not be obliged to obey any man; secondly, the church would be without a constant ministry; thirdly, no man could know whether he were truly baptized, or were a Christian; fourthly, every man might reject or choose for his superior whomsoever he pleased; fifthly, there could not be any election made of ministers; sixthly, at every turn men might call the power of the ministers into question, because they are always liable to sin; seventhly, it would be necessary to recondem, nay, and to re baptize, all those who committed mortal sin."—*Dupin, Eccl. Hist.* book iii. p. 363. art. Scysselius

being undertaken, whereby a country is induced to open at once a highway for the progress of intelligence. A principality or a republic, here a few scholars, and there a band of simple citizens, manifested for a time their inclination to embrace reform; but no help was given to them by the invigorating bonds of national sympathy; and though many, led to acknowledge the true doctrines of eternal life, found thereby the means of salvation for themselves, no legacy was left for posterity — no monument raised round which their descendants might gather with a holy feeling of joy and confidence in the power of the Gospel.

It was at Venice and in Naples that the reformed doctrines produced the most important effects. The former of these states enjoyed a degree of independence, founded on the possession of wealth, which gave it the power of choosing for itself whether it would follow truth or error. Its population, moreover, was formed of persons who had every advantage in their favour, when called upon to resist the influence of superstition. They were connected by commercial transactions with the world at large; had seen religion under many forms, and tried the worth of its several professors. The church had never been able to curb their ambition, or abridge their independence; and, though not less attached than other states to the splendour of its ancient services, they sacrificed no scheme of policy to support the popes in their authority. It was in this city that the boldest of modern satirists, the boisterous but subtle Aretino, could venture to pour forth his pasquinades; and here alone it was, that the liberty of the press had been so far assumed, that merchants traded in books from all parts of Europe, without asking a question whether or not they were heretical.

There would have been cause for surprise, if, in a population of this description, and under such favourable circumstances, the doctrines of the reformers had not found attention. But, notwithstanding the proofs which exist, that evangelical truth was received here by

many devout minds, its progress was not sufficient to give us a very favourable idea of the readiness of the Venetians, as a people, to adopt its cause. The books of Luther were read at Venice as early as the year 1520. Eight years after this, he wrote a letter to an acquaintance residing there, and expresses his pleasure at the intelligence he had received respecting the willingness of the Venetians to accept the word of God. But though the reformation is said to have continued from this time to make great progress*, we find that ten or twelve years more passed away before the persons professing its doctrines ventured to think of establishing themselves as a congregation, or performing their worship in the sight of the world. At the end of that period, sufficient encouragement was given by certain members of the senate to induce them to form plans for this purpose. But late as were these projects, they led to no permanent arrangements; and the pope, having now begun to turn his attention with greater determination than formerly to the suppression of the sect, the more zealous of its members, while willing themselves to suffer, saw fear or indifference gradually separating the rest from their communion.

In Naples, the doctrines of Luther were established by the exertions of Juan Valdez, the Spanish gentleman already mentioned. During his visit to Germany, he had examined the protestant creed with such attention as to become a convert to its principles; and on being appointed secretary to the viceroy of Naples, he devoted his influence to the furtherance of the Lutheran cause with a zeal as successful as it was ardent. Having laboured by himself for some time, he at length obtained the co-operation of Bernardus Ochino, and Pietro Martire Vermigli, — the one a capuchin monk, the other a man of family and an Augustine. Both these persons had been led to the examination of divine truth by a deep sense of its importance; and they sympathised with Valdez becaus-

* M'Crie's Hist. of Reform. in Italy

he spoke to them of doctrines which they found, by the view of their own condition and that of mankind at large, to be those of divine benevolence. Ochino had long enjoyed the reputation of a preacher not less apostolic in doctrine, than eloquent in expression. "That man would make the stones weep," said Charles V. after hearing one of his sermons; and such was the respect inspired by his fame and his piety, that although he always travelled on foot, and in the simple apparel which belonged to the severest of the monkish orders, he was greeted, wherever he appeared, with marks of the profoundest reverence. A still stronger testimony to his powers and holiness of character is found in the account of the friendship with which he was regarded by the pious and accomplished Vittoria Colonna. At her request he went to Venice in order to preach there during Lent; and cardinal Bembo, by whose desire it was that the marchioness sent him, describes his preaching as the holiest and most useful he had ever heard. "His style," says he, "is unlike that of any one who has undertaken the office of a preacher in my day: there is more of Christianity in it; it breathes of love and charity, and abounds in the expression of the most important truths." *

* Erasmus makes a similar allusion to the dry and unprofitable style of the preachers of this period, and gives instructions on the subject which prove how acceptable Ochino must have been.

"To bless the people," says he, "is certainly a magnificent thing; and to administer the sacraments is a most excellent function; but there is nothing either more apostolical, or more episcopal, than to frame the minds and morals of Christians so as to make them worthy of Jesus Christ, by preaching to them the doctrine of eternal salvation. Yet we see many of those who engage themselves in so excellent a profession, that have nothing of learning, or they want zeal, or they have not the art of speaking, and are without eloquence. Well, but, as St. Paul says, provided Jesus Christ be preached, it is no great matter how it be done; but then the worst of it is, that a great many of those preachers, instead of preaching Jesus Christ, preach only themselves. There are some of them who discourse very subtilly in the pulpit of Scotistical questions, which the people they speak to understand nothing of, and they think thereby to be the more admired; others preach only scholastical matters; some sermons are composed of confused collections of scraps of civil or canon law, and of some citations from other authors. He who would instil true piety and devotion into the hearts of the people, ought to banish out of his own heart all sort of passion; and, if he would instruct the people in the true principles of Christian philosophy, it is much more proper to show the admirable and charming image of true piety in his natural dress, than to strain his voice and his lungs to no purpose in exclaiming against vice. The

Ochino preached at Naples with the same fervour and eloquence as had distinguished his discourses in other parts of Italy. Valdez heard him with a pleasure rendered doubly great by the discovery that his opinions were in reality the same as his own. They soon became intimate. Peter Martyr, as Vermigli is commonly called, who was then provost of the college of St. Peter's, joined them not long after; and these three eminent and powerful men quickly formed a party, which promised more than any other that had arisen to secure for protestantism a firm establishment in the country.

Ferrara is distinguished in the annals of the Reformation as having afforded an asylum to several of the early sufferers for the cause in France. There, for some time, lived Marot in peace and affluence; and thither, it is said, came Calvin, to whose preaching the

image of virtue will powerfully recommend itself: the only thing that is necessary to make people in love with it, is to set it in a true light before their eyes. It is needless to discover vices, unless it is those that cheat us under an appearance of virtue; and by pointing out a vice, people are often taught to practice it; and by declaiming earnestly against it, it comes to be believed that the preacher envies those who are guilty of it, and that he loves to speak of it. Why should a man discover all the several ways that people sin against chastity? Why should he make so much noise, in representing to the people that all the world is full of adulteries? Would it not be much better to represent the venerable image of chastity? which so soon as St. Augustin considered, he immediately detested all those horrible ideas of impurity. The same may be said of other parts of Christian morality: whoever begins to esteem the picture of Christian piety, he begins at the same time to abhor vice, and every thing that is not agreeable to that notion he has of virtue: no more do I approve of those preachers, who, to gain a reputation among the meaner sort of people, declaim seditiously against the vices of bishops or princes. These sorts of declamations do nothing but incense those whom a moderate, prudent, and civil admonition, seasonably given, might have reclaimed. Some liberty must be allowed to a pious zeal, but it ought always to be sweetened with charity: we ought to deal as gently as we can with those who are invested with sovereign and public power; and if a man must show his zeal, he ought rather to speak against those who make a wrong use of the papal, or the episcopal, or the royal authority, than against the authorities themselves. We must not rashly exclaim against a whole order, but we may reprove those who dishonour their orders, which ought to be highly esteemed for their good rules. In a word, a sermon will be of greater weight if the preacher takes it out of the sacred Scriptures, if his life be answerable to his doctrine, and if his ministry is not despised by his being suspected of vain glory or of avarice. If he himself be heartily in love with the truths that he preaches, his discourse will have the greater efficacy; and he shall be in a better condition to convince others, if he goes immediately to the pulpit from his prayers, with a heart full of zeal and charity.'

amiable, and subsequently persecuted, duchess owed her fuller acquaintance with the Gospel. At Bologna, the labours of John Mollio, a learned professor in the university, were productive of great good. Though charged with heresy by a rival professor in the schools, and obliged to plead his cause at Rome, he was dismissed with no worse rebuke than this,—that he had taught what was true, but what it was not expedient should be taught. He was soon after, however, obliged to quit Bologna; and the Lutherans of that place, seeing themselves left without a guide or support, lamented their miserable condition in being so exposed to the “yoke of Antichrist. But protestantism continued to increase at Bologna, notwithstanding its immediate subjection to the pope; and Seckendorf quotes a writer who states, that a certain nobleman there was prepared to lead forth an army composed of 6000 of the reformed, if the signal were given to attack pope Paul.*

Milan also took part in the movement; nor was there any city of importance where some persons could not be found who willingly shared in the dangers of a new profession, from the feelings of hope which simultaneously filled their hearts.

At length an order was issued from the papal court, and proceedings were commenced without further forbearance. The first state attacked was that of Modena, the next Ferrara, whence the protestants fled in terror, and left the duchess herself to endure indignities which would have bowed a spirit less firm to the earth. Venice, it might have been expected, would have still asserted its independence, but it basely yielded to the policy of the day. The influence of the pontiff prevailed, in a similar manner, over the rest of Italy: an inquisition was established, and terror reigned in the hearts of many who, but a short time before, seemed ready to embrace martyrdom for the sake of the truth. At the beginning of the persecution, both Ochino and Martyr

* Seckendorf, lib. iii. p. 65.

fled ; and their departure added fresh fears to the already disheartened Lutherans.

Some years, however, appear to have elapsed before any of the persecuted and terrified protestants were openly put to death. According to the "*Histoire des Martyrs*," the first martyrdom which took place in Venice occurred in 1562. It was that of Julio Guirlanda, a native of Trevisano. This person was executed in the manner so generally practised by the Venetians in putting their prisoners to death ; and, though it makes us shudder less at the idea of what they suffered, than we do while reading the recitals of martyrdoms in other countries, the imagination is more appalled at the death-like calm amid which they resigned their lives, than by the tumultuous scenes, and the fires, and armed executioners, which we have seen described as a part of Spanish persecutions. There was not, however, any greater degree of mystery employed in the executions of the unfortunate protestants at Venice, than the republic practised in removing other obnoxious individuals from the state. The Bridge of Sighs, the prisons, and the whole system of government in that most remarkable of cities, partook of the same character of deep mystery ; and the merchant princes of the Adriatic could not have practised greater secrecy in the most important of their private concerns, than they did when assembled together in council. At a late period even of Venetian history, we read of large numbers of persons having been secretly put to death, and of their bodies being found floating on the waves, to the consternation of the citizens, who were thus kept in dread of secret conspiracies on the one hand, and, on the other, of the invisible sword of justice, which so fearfully imitated the pestilence, and slew in darkness.

But the Venetian statesmen were too wise in their proceedings to employ any species of public punishments, the spectacle of which might tend to harden the evil-minded in their courses, or, in the case of religious persecution, rouse popular passions and sympathies, which, to the honour of humanity, are so generally on the side

of the sufferers. Death by drowning, therefore, appeared to them the least objectionable of capital punishments; for at the moment when mortal suffering commenced, the witnesses of the execution had lost all tokens of the criminal's fate. To make this circumstance still more available to their purpose, the executions generally took place in darkness, and in the presence of those only who had charge of the solemn proceedings.

Thus, in the account left us of the execution of Julio Guirlanda, we find that, after having been confined in the dungeons of the Council of Ten, with three companions with whom he was about to leave the city when apprehended, he was put into a gondola, and having been carried some way out to sea, was ordered to stand on a plank, one end of which had been laid on the edge of the boat in which he was conveyed, and the other on that of another gondola which accompanied his executioners. Obeying the orders of the captain, he placed himself on the centre of the board, heavy weights being fixed to his feet; and at the moment the sign was given, the gondoliers rowed their respective barks apart, and the martyr sunk without a struggle into the waves, calling, as he fell, on the name of the Saviour.

Antonio Ricetto, the only one of Guirlanda's three companions who did not recant, was put to death in a similar manner, and exhibited, throughout the long and horrible trial of his constancy, the spirit which animated the primitive sufferers for Christianity. While he was in prison, his son, a lad about twelve years old, came to his cell, and, crying bitterly, prayed him to do what the council commanded, and not to expose himself to death, and leave him an orphan. But the appeal of his child was resisted with the same fortitude as the threats of his persecutors. On the 15th of February, about two hours after midnight, an officer of the council came to the prison, and having found Sega, one of Ricetto's companions, prepared to recant his opinions, he proceeded to the cell of the latter, and, telling him of the alteration in his associate's disposition, ad-

vised him to follow the example. But, "What have I to do with Sega? I desire to do the will of God," was the only reply Ricetto condescended to make to the captain's announcement. Without further delay, therefore, he was taken from the dungeon, and placed, heavily ironed, in a gondola, which awaited him under the walls of the prison. A priest, who accompanied the party, offered him, as they proceeded, a wooden crucifix to kiss; but Ricetto rejected it, with the remark, that it was not by the use of such things salvation was to be obtained, but by living according to the spirit of the Christian religion. While thus continuing to profess his adherence to the doctrines for which he was about to suffer, the gondola reached the spot, known by two castles or watch-towers which stood in the neighbourhood. The captain then bound his hands; but the night air being piercingly cold, Ricetto, notwithstanding the near approach of death, requested that his cloak, which had been taken from him, might be given him again. "What!" said one of the gondoliers, "do you fear a little cold? What will you do at the bottom of the sea? Why do you not save yourself? Even the maddest avoid death!"—"And so do I," replied the martyr, "eternal death!" When they had gone some way farther, the gondoliers ceased to row, and the captain, fastening a chain with a heavy weight attached to it about the body of his prisoner, placed him at once on the plank, on which he remained only a sufficient time to recommend himself to God; after having done which, he fell from the board, not caring to wait for the rowing of the boats asunder.

Sega, some time after, repented of his weakness, and suffered martyrdom in the same manner as Ricetto. His death was followed by that of Francesco Spinola, who was also drowned in the sea, beyond the castles.

Of the number who, it is supposed, suffered in the Venetian states, it is these four only of whose death any particular notice remains, their names having been

buried in oblivion by the same policy which taught the rulers of the Adriatic to let their victims sink quietly to death in the waves, rather than expose their sufferings to public view on the scaffold. One of the characteristics, indeed, of the persecutions in Italy, at this period, was the sweeping effect of the barbarous policy pursued by the oppressors. It was not here and there that some few conspicuous individuals were seen laying down their lives; but whole towns and provinces were filled with terror, and large portions of their population driven into exile, leaving those who had taught them the truths of religion to be put to death, or to linger out the remainder of their lives in prison. This was the fate which attended the protestants of Locarno, who, to the amount of 200 persons, were obliged to forsake their homes, and, in the midst of winter, make a perilous journey over a mountainous tract into the country of the Grisons and Switzerland.

But if no record remained of the barbarities practised, under the direction of the pope, in other parts of Italy, the accounts which have been handed down to us of the sanguinary scenes which took place within Rome itself, would be sufficient to stamp the whole history of the persecution with its proper character. Protestantism, it appears, had many advocates at Rome, and a still greater number of secret converts; and this circumstance would, no doubt, contribute to influence the angry passions of such men as Julius III., Paul IV., and his successor Pius, all of them distinguished for their violence and their bigotry. Still it is with astonishment that we find such barbarities could be practised in the very capital of Christendom, in an age which enjoyed the reflected light of more than two centuries of extraordinary intellectual activity, and in which the human mind was every where seen expanding, and manifesting its capabilities to receive and bring to perfection the seeds of truth. Even the Roman populace regarded with unbridled impatience and disgust the proceedings

of the men whom they had been taught from their infancy to look upon as endowed with a species of divinity ; and, at the death of Paul, the house of the inquisition was burnt to the ground.

But the hatred with which the name of the deceased tyrant was remembered by those who could best observe his actions, made no impression on the feelings of his successor. Another mansion was appointed for the meetings of the tribunal, and the confinement of those who should unfortunately fall into its power. The inquisition found none of its privileges diminished by the transfer of the sovereign authority through the hands of successive pontiffs. In the narrative of the events which now occurred, we read of travellers being seized, and thrown into prison, on the mere suspicion of being protestants ; of executions by burning, hanging, or the axe, taking place every day on account of religion ; and of a man of rank, who had been condemned by the inquisition, having to pay 7000 crowns for the indulgence of being strangled before he was burnt. The spirit with which some of the protestants suffered at Rome was as bold when confronted with the oppressors, as it was resigned in suffering. An instance of this kind was afforded by Giovanni Mollio, the banished professor of Bologna, who had been lately seized at Ravenna, and thence conducted to the capital. The trial of this excellent and learned man, together with several other persons accused of the same crime, was commenced with extraordinary solemnity. Six cardinals, with a corresponding number of bishops, their assessors, who composed the holy office, were present on the occasion ; and the prisoners, to increase the awfulness of the proceedings, were each of them obliged to bear a torch. With men of either weak minds or weak faith, the imposing grandeur of the scene had a considerable effect ; and all the persons who stood arraigned before the tribunal, except Mollio and another, sought their safety by an immediate recantation.

But the enlightened professor was not to be awed by

a spectacle, and, after hearing the heads of his accusation read, he addressed his judges in a clear and fearless defence of the principles which he supported. As he proceeded, his language and manner became more and more animated ; and, aided by the consciousness of imminent danger, as well as by his deep devotion to the cause for which he was pleading, he rebuked his persecutors, and argued against their vices and errors with such energy and eloquence, that all who heard him were astonished ; those who were most unwilling to bear any testimony to his honesty or ability, confessing his power by the bitter feelings which his invectives inspired. The old "*Histoire des Martyrs*" gives a particular account of these proceedings ; and reports that Mollio, addressing himself directly to his judges, exclaimed, in the course of his speech, " Could I believe, cardinals and bishops, that the power you arrogate to yourselves is legitimate, or that you have attained it by works of piety, instead of by the artifices of a profligate ambition, I would not thus address you. But knowing, as I do, that you have despised moderation, modesty, and virtue, I feel bound to treat you without ceremony, and declare that your authority is not of God, but of the devil." Pursuing the same vehement strain, and denouncing them as the enemies of truth, he at last said, " I appeal, therefore, from your sentence ; and summon you, O ye murderers and tyrants, to answer before the judgment-seat of Christ, where neither your lofty-sounding titles nor your glittering robes can dazzle, nor your guards or instruments of torture appal us ; in testimony of which, take back this which you have given me !" As he uttered the last words, he flung the torch which he had been obliged to carry on the floor of the apartment, and extinguished it.

The fate of Mollio was quickly decided upon after he had concluded this address. As if they could derive some comfort from his immediate death, the judges ordered his execution to take place without delay ; and their commands being scrupulously obeyed, he was led, with

the other protestants who had refused to recant, to the Campo del Fior—exhibiting to the last the same unchanging fortitude and conviction of the truth, which had characterised their conduct both in prison and at the tribunal.

Mention is made in the catalogue of the sufferers during this persecution, of a young Englishman, who, either irritated by the tyranny which he saw exercised over the consciences of the Italians, or disgusted at the pomp and ceremonies employed to conceal the want of religion itself, seized the host from a priest as he was carrying it along the street, and threw it on the ground;—an intemperate act, and one which can only be excused on the supposition, that it was prompted by the irrepressible indignation with which a young and virtuous mind sees the work of oppression carried on; and more especially when it is carried on under the name of religion. We need scarcely add, that the young man was punished for his temerity. His hand was first cut off, and he was then committed to the flames.

An instance occurs in the history of Bartolommeo Bartoccio, of the firmness with which some of the Italian protestants retained their principles, not merely in the first moments of excitement, but after years had deprived the mind of any other feeling in respect to them, but its conviction of their truth. Bartoccio happened to be in the town of Sienna when it underwent an obstinate siege, and he was thereby kept a prisoner for several months. This circumstance, however, was the means of converting him to protestantism. One of his friends, who had himself become a convert to the reformed doctrines, omitted no opportunity of persuading him to follow his example; but for six months his exhortations were repeated without avail. At the end of that time, Bartoccio began to discover the errors of the system in which he had been educated, and soon after became a confirmed ally of the reformers. On returning home to Castel, a town in the duchy of Spoleto, he was taken dangerously ill; and the family confessor, and even

the bishop of the diocese, used all the persuasions of which they were masters, to induce him to recant his opinions before his death, which they expected would shortly take place. But he refused; and having slightly recovered, made his escape from the threats of the magistrates by scaling the walls of the town. He hastened immediately to Sienna and Venice, where he received letters from his father, offering him money and promising forgiveness if he would return and become a good catholic. All, however, proved vain; and he proceeded to Geneva, where he married, and became a silk-merchant. He remained there safe for several years, till, having occasion to visit Genoa for the purchase of goods, and disdaining to take a fictitious name, he was apprehended and cast into prison by the inquisition. He thus writes to his wife on the event: — “The first day of my imprisonment,” says he, “I greatly desired to write to you, both for your consolation and mine; but it did not please God. The sorrow which you will feel at my imprisonment has augmented, and still augments, my affliction, more, perhaps, than it ought; and I pray all day long, with tears and supplications, to God, our Father, both for you and for me, that he would give us grace to be comforted, and resign ourselves patiently to his will. My prayer has not been ineffectual in regard to myself; and I hope also that, by the grace of our Lord, it will not be without its influence on your heart. I trust also that, having surmounted all temptations, you will do in like manner for yourself and me. Remember, my dear sister, I speak to you as to myself, since we are one body, that the doctrine of the Gospel to the children of God is not a simple science, learnt by the understanding and expressed in language, but that it ought to have its seat in the heart, and to command the whole character — showing by its effects, whenever any occasion presents itself, the truth of those things whereof others make profession. . . . I have been made a prisoner! Shall we say that this has happened by chance? that men have done it without God having

any part in the occurrence? We must answer, No! for men cannot do contrary to that which God intends; and we have, therefore, to confess that the Lord has thus willed and ordained; and God, we know from Saint Paul, makes all things work together for good to them who love Him. With regard to my present life, I am well assured that my body will be consecrated as a sacrifice to the Lord, in such a manner and after such a mode as shall please Him, unless He choose to deliver me by a miracle, which I have no reason to hope, seeing He effects things by second causes. You may use whatever means are possible, knowing where I shall always be; but the principal thing which I desire you to do, is to pray for me without ceasing, conforming yourself to the will of God, that he may be glorified in me, for I have much need of your prayers.” He continues to urge the various topics of consolation to be derived from Scripture; and concludes with affectionately exhorting her to watch over, and bring up, their children in habits of virtue and piety.

Bartoccio suffered the fate which, as it appears from this letter, he anticipated. No consideration whatever could deter him from the course he had taken in the defence of truth; and after undergoing a wearisome imprisonment of near two years, he was condemned to the flames: like many other martyrs, he made a triumph of his execution, and was distinctly heard to exclaim, as the fire consumed him, “Victory! victory!”

Sufficient proof is afforded by these instances of individual devotion, that the free firm spirit of protestantism animated great numbers of the Italians, and that the persecution to which they were subjected was equal in ferocity to any of which history makes mention. It was a principle in Italian politics, for many ages, to keep all the operations of government as secret as possible; to do nothing by open or direct means, which could be effected with equal certainty by the safer methods of concealed art. There was acknowledged wisdom in this; and the principle was acted upon, as far as the nature of the

case would admit, in putting down the heresy of protestantism. The union between the professors of the new doctrines was, as we have observed, necessarily slight; and the prudent measures which the court of Rome, and those who acted under it, pursued, prevented its ever becoming stronger. No loud-tongued memorials were suffered to circulate through the country, commemorating the constancy of those who fell; instead of making solemn processions for the martyrs, till the people might readily imagine them offered up as sacrifices, they were executed as criminals, and were, for the most part, put out of the way without any opportunity being given them of exciting public sympathy.

While the reformation was thus successfully resisted in Spain and Italy, its doctrines were diffused through France, England, the Low Countries, Denmark, and other northern states, with a steady and constantly increasing vigour. The first preacher of Lutheranism in France was John le Clerc, a wool-comber of Meaux, whose only qualifications for the office were his piety and his good sense. Favoured by the bishop of the see, he soon gathered round him a congregation consisting of between three and four hundred persons. Some learned men, invited by the bishop, joined him in the work of instructing this people; and protestantism was established in the heart of the kingdom, before suspicion had been awakened to its approach. Le Clerc seems to have hastened the opposition which might be looked for, by a burst of zeal somewhat ill-timed and intemperate. Having openly declared the pope to be Antichrist, he brought upon himself the implacable hatred of the clergy and the magistrates. A brief consultation sufficed to determine both his guilt and his punishment. He was accordingly seized, condemned to be whipped, and then driven into banishment. Though thus separated from his flock, he did not give up the hope of being still useful to the church of Christ. He therefore repaired to the city of Metz, and resumed his preaching with an ardour which had been increased, rather than

abated, by persecution. But his zeal again overcame his prudence. Not content with declaring his doctrines and expounding the word of God, he proceeded to pull down the images from the churches, and thus excited the indignation of the public authorities, by whom he was seized and condemned to be burnt.

The execution of Le Clerc took place in 1523 ; and shortly after the parliament of Paris published a decree consigning Luther's books to the flames. It was ordered, at the same time, that Melanethon's writings should be collected, and given into the hands of the bishop, who was to examine them with the divines, and pass such a sentence on their contents as they should deem fit. This order was fulfilled ; and the writings of Melanethon were declared to be full of heresy, and as dangerous as those of Luther ; and even more so, from the artifices of style with which he had invested them.*

Among the friends of Le Clerc at Meaux, were William Farel, Gerhard Roussel, Faber, and Arnold. At the expulsion of their leader, these excellent men were also driven from the city, and like him, but with less fatal consequences, they sought another field for useful exertion. Divine providence did not intend that protestantism should yield, in France, to the first blast of the tempest. Its early defenders, therefore, were allowed to find protectors and a place of refuge. The queen of Navarre, sister of Francis I., and one of the most accomplished women of the day, received the refugees at her court ; found them employment ; consulted with them on the interests of religion ; and rendered her husband, by degrees, as devoted as herself to the Lutheran cause and its advocates.

Francis heard of these proceedings with anger and apprehension. Less capable than Charles V. of considering such a subject with the sedateness of a sovereign or the foresight of a politician, and too much engaged in the pursuits of fame or pleasure to study it in its spiritual relations, he only yielded to the im-

* Dupin. Fleury. Laetelle, Hist. de France.

pression made on his mind by the reports which were brought him, and acted accordingly. The queen of Navarre, on being summoned to his presence, took with her Gerhard Roussel and two Augustine monks. Francis expressed great disapprobation of the alterations she had attempted to introduce into public worship; accused her of endeavouring to abolish the mass, and supplying its place by novelties for which there was no authority in the word of God. To this she replied by desiring the divines who attended her to produce the document containing the substance of their demands. These were—1. That the priest should read the mass as usual, but always administer the communion at the same time: 2. That the elevation of the *host* should be discontinued: 3. That it should not be adored: 4. That the communion should be administered to all in both kinds: 5. That there should be no commemoration of the Virgin or the other saints in the sacrament: 6. That common bread should be used; and that the priest should simply break it, and then distribute it to the people: 7. That the marriage of priests should be allowed.*

These articles formed the basis of French protestantism, and were afterwards called the “mass with the seven points.” Francis listened impatiently to the arguments which Roussel and the Augustines offered for their reception. At the end of the conference, his anger was so excited that he ordered them into confinement; and they would probably have shared the fate of Le Clerc, but for the powerful influence of their protector. But neither Roussel nor his associates were marked by great ardour of zeal. On being set at liberty, the monks resumed their habits, as was ordered; and the former, appointed by the queen of Navarre to the bishopric of Oleron, contented himself with reforming the more palpable abuses of the mass and other rites of the church.

But new advocates of Lutheranism soon appeared in the church: and the people of Paris were astonished to

* Dupin, *Eccles. Hist.* b. ii. c. xxx. p. 180.

hear the rector of St. Eustathius, the most eloquent of their preachers, declaim publicly against the abuses which had marred the simplicity of divine things. On being called before Francis, he declared his sentiments still more fully on the subject, and even succeeded in impressing the monarch with a feeling of the reasonableness of his arguments. The divines were even ordered to refrain from condemning him, that he might appeal to Scripture on what he had ventured to assert; and thus the most valuable privilege contended for every where by the protestants, received from Francis himself a clear and decided sanction. But the danger of such a concession was at once discovered by his more artful advisers. They represented, that to allow a controversy in such matters, was to open the door to countless innovators, and shake the foundations of what was most firmly settled. Their advice prevailed, and means were found to induce the rector of St. Eustathius to preach, for the future, in a different style, and on less dangerous subjects.

Notwithstanding the weakness or placability of spirit which appeared in some of the earliest advocates of reform, the doctrines of Luther continued to spread both in the capital and other parts of the kingdom. The university of Paris was an open school of learning, the resort of scholars from every quarter of Europe. It was impossible that, amid this concourse of studious and inquisitive minds—some mature in thought, others glowing with delight at the anticipation of new discoveries—no mention should be made, or no inquiry instituted into the subject, of Lutheranism. Equally unlikely was it, that points so calculated to excite argument should be named, and find no advocates. But no sooner is disputation commenced, than incipient belief enlarges the sphere of doctrine, increases in force and determination, discovers new reasons for perseverance in its course, and for adopting measures to secure the assent of others.

The presence of Lutheranism in the university, and its gradual diffusion among the people of Paris, was

observed by the heads of the church and the king's advisers with angry apprehension. At the close of the year 1527, the clergy held an assembly for petitioning Francis to take the subject into consideration, and forthwith commence such measures as might seem best calculated to stop the increase of the evil. In the following February, the bishops of the province met for a similar purpose, and decrees were passed which prohibited the acknowledgment of Lutheran doctrines under the severest penalties.*

These proceedings on the part of the church did not terminate with the publication of edicts or admonitions. An occasion soon presented itself for the exercise of its authority in the punishment of the new heresy. Louis Berquin, a Flemish gentleman and an officer in the royal council, was the first victim of its fury. This martyr in the cause of protestantism is described by even catholic writers as an example of holiness and charity; but having ventured to publish some tracts against the prevalent vices and superstitions of the day, he was, as early as the year 1523, made the object of a prosecution. His enemies, on this occasion, were contented with depriving him of his liberty for a short period, and condemning his books to the flames. A similar result followed the repetition of the charge—Francis himself interfering to prevent the accusers of Berquin from proceeding to extremities. But the thirst for his blood was not to be satiated without the draught. He was again apprehended; and the clergy and the monks regarded their triumph over heresy as almost complete, when they heard the judges pronounce his sentence, which purported that, after being first compelled to abjure his doctrines, and having had his tongue bored through, that he might be no longer able to repeat his heresies, he was to suffer imprisonment for life. Berquin appealed from this iniquitous sentence to the king and the pope: on hearing which, the judges again assembled, and, to vindicate their dignity and the

* Fleury, *Hist. Ecclés.* art. v. sec. 9.

† Dupin.

justice of their proceedings, immediately condemned him to death. No time was allowed for a second appeal. He was burnt alive the following day.

The death of Berquin produced a thrill of horror in the hearts of the numerous body of people who believed, without openly professing, the doctrines for which he suffered. Their faith gathered strength from the discovery, that its enemies were in possession of none of those weapons of spiritual warfare which the Almighty may always be expected to bestow upon the champions of truth. The struggles, the triumphs, and sufferings, which attended their increasing zeal and knowledge, will be viewed in connection with the further progress of the reformation in Germany, and its origin and growth in our own country.

We have now contemplated the most important of those events which led to the establishment of religious freedom, in the full enjoyment of which mankind possess the highest species of good. The noblest minds were called forth as the instruments of this great work. It was intended to open a free path for knowledge; and those employed at the earliest stage of the undertaking were men fitted to sympathise with the inquirers after truth in every age, and with whom those inquirers must themselves sympathise. Luther, Melancthon, Œcolampadius, Zuingle, would have risen as far above the mass of their fellow men in this century, as they did in their own. They were impelled by an energy as active as it was holy; and the Almighty, having manifested, at the planting of the Gospel, how it needed not human wisdom to effect the purposes of divine wisdom, now afforded a great example of the manner in which He could employ the gifts of learning and genius, as willing subordinates to the graces of his Spirit. The characters, the opinions, and the struggles of such men as those whom God raised up at this period, form in themselves a theme for study not less elevating to the mind than it is good as an incentive to the love of holiness.

The establishment of the Reformation was a triumphant exhibition of the power which belongs to truth. It was begun by an appeal to the Bible ; and the simplicity of the divine word confounded the subtlest minds that attempted to resist it. Some sacrifices were early needed. They were offered up in the spirit of primitive faith ; and blessed be the names and memories of those who gave their lives for such a cause ! Equally blessed be those who, in our own days, give their hearts and minds to the defence of the Gospel ; and who, shunning, as forbidden by the law of love, whatever savours of retorted violence and oppression, seek only to convince and subdue by the wisdom from above, by the diffusion of that knowledge, on the free acceptance of which it is the vital principle of protestantism to rest the issue of its claims !

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